

LONDON (R) — Children can be damaged by balloons, health experts warned. Balloons can cause airway blockage, leading to asphyxiation, said Dr. Simon Clarke, a paediatrician at Belfast's Royal Victoria Hospital. He described the case of a 1-year-old boy who had swallowed a balloon. The boy's parents had bought the balloons from a stall in a park. The boy had been playing with the balloons for about 10 minutes before he was found. The boy was taken to hospital and the balloon was removed from his stomach. The boy is now recovering well.

YDNEY (AFP) — A court judge has sentenced a woman to 10 years in prison for the murder of her husband. The woman, who was 35 years old, was found guilty of murdering her 45-year-old husband in 1992. The judge said the woman had a "cold and calculated" mind. The woman was sentenced to 10 years in prison, with 5 years suspended. She is to be released in 1997.

Vife finds perfect mate has law — e's a she

WASHINGTON (R) — A woman who got married online found out that the man was not who he said he was. The woman, who was 35 years old, had met the man on a website. They had been communicating for several months before she decided to meet him. When she met him, she found out that he was not who he said he was. He was a married man with a child. The woman has now filed a lawsuit against the man.

Good news for it — cheap
hisky is safer

LONDON (R) — It is better to drink a little of the cheap stuff than to drink a lot of the expensive stuff, health experts say. The experts said that drinking a little of the cheap stuff can be safer than drinking a lot of the expensive stuff. They said that the cheap stuff is often made from better quality ingredients than the expensive stuff. They also said that the cheap stuff is often less likely to be adulterated than the expensive stuff.

yprior pregnant
with 11 babies

COSIA (R) — A woman is pregnant with 11 babies, doctors say. The woman, who was 35 years old, was found to be pregnant with 11 babies during a routine ultrasound. The doctors said that the woman was in good health and that the babies were all developing well. The woman is expected to give birth in January 1997.

Iraqis receive ration cards for 1997

BAGHDAD (AFP) — Iraqis began receiving on Saturday their food ration coupons for 1997, which should provide more basic goods given the partial resumption of oil sales under a humanitarian deal with the United Nations. People were starting to go to distribution centres to obtain their ration cards after announcement by the commerce ministry. Iraqi authorities began the rationing system after a U.N. economic embargo was imposed on Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait. Iraqis receive each a monthly ration of rice, sugar, flour, vegetable oil, soap and milk. The amount of the ration is to be increased for the first time in 1997, after the implementation of the oil-for-food deal with the U.N., which allows Iraq to sell \$2 billion worth of oil every six months to buy food and medicines. According to the World Food Programme, the agreement will increase the calories of each day's rations from 1,200 to 2,030. But that level is well below the recommended 2,800 calories per person.

Volume 21 Number 6410

AMMAN SUNDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1996, SHAABAN 11, 1417

Price: Jordan 150 Fils

Daoudieh, Hussein meet in Orient House

AMMAN (R) — Minister of Youth Muhammad Daoudieh on Saturday met at the Orient House with the Palestinian National Authority's minister of Jerusalem affairs, Faisal Husseini, and discussed with him the latest developments in the peace process and issues of common concern.

Algerian court sentences 21 to death

PARIS (R) — An Algerian court sentenced on Saturday 21 militants to death for involvement in guerrilla activities, the official Algerian news agency APS said on Saturday. The criminal court in Medea, 70 kilometres south of Algiers, found them guilty of assassinations and conspiracy against the Algerian state security, APS said. Six other militants in the court on Thursday were condemned to life in prison for belonging to an armed group, murder and theft, said APS. About 60,000 people have been killed in Algeria's violence since early 1992 when the authorities cancelled a general election that radicals were poised to win.

Syria: Israeli policies risk new tensions

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria's official radio warned on Saturday that the "extremist" policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu could lead to an explosion of tension in the Middle East. "All those who placed bets on a change in Netanyahu's extremist policy are today among the disappointed," Radio Damascus said in a broadcast just hours before the arrival in Israel of U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross. "Israel's extremist policy has not only frozen the peace process but it is leading towards new tensions," the radio said. "The eagerness of the Zionist extremists towards aggression will lead the entire region towards the abyss," the radio added, warning of "disastrous consequences which will spare no one, if the warmongers undertake an aggression" against the Arabs.

Egyptian military handles spy case

CAIRO (R) — The Egyptian military prosecutor will handle the case against an Egyptian arrested on suspicion of spying for Israel, security sources said on Saturday. "The military prosecution has received the papers of Samir Osman's case," a source told Reuters. Osman, 47, was arrested last month on suspicion of selling military information to Mossad, the Israeli secret service.

Taiwan foreign minister returns home

TAIPEI (AFP) — Taiwanese Foreign Minister John Chang returned home Saturday after visiting Jordan and the United Arab Emirates. Mr. Chang described the trip as "positive and fruitful." Mr. Chang was accompanied on the mission by Wang Wei Chieh, western Asian affairs director in Taiwan's foreign ministry.

Jordan reiterates total support for Palestinian independence

King and Arafat discuss peace process during Palestinian leader's working visit

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Jordan on Saturday reiterated its absolute support for the Palestinian people's struggle for independence.

In talks with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, His Majesty King Hussein also reaffirmed that Jordan would continue to extend backing for the Palestinian people in their efforts to regain their legitimate rights on their homeland, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

Petra said the King and Mr. Arafat, who returned to his headquarters in Gaza Saturday afternoon after a brief working visit to Jordan, discussed the latest developments in the Palestinian-Israeli track of negotiations and the problems facing the negotiations. The two leaders also discussed "other issues of mutual concern," the agency added.

King Hussein briefed Mr. Arafat on ongoing Jordanian efforts to lift the logjam in the peace process and reinvigorate Arab-Israeli peace negotiations, and the outcome of Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy's talks here on Thursday.

The Palestinian leader updated the King on the outcome of his recent tour of Europe and his contacts with world leaders. Particularly discussed was the deadlocked Israeli-Palestinian talks on Israeli redeployment in Hebron.

The King and Mr. Arafat stressed the need for stepped-up efforts and close coordination to give

impetus to the peace process, Petra said.

Mr. Arafat told the King that the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) was planning to lodge a formal protest with the United Nations Security Council against Israel's plans to build a settlement in the Ras Al Amud area in the heart of Arab East Jerusalem.

The PNA knew that the U.S. would veto any move to endorse the Palestinian protest if it was brought in the Security Council, Mr. Arafat told the King.

The King and Mr. Arafat had a closed-door meeting, which was followed by an enlarged meeting attended by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and officials from both sides.

The Jordanian delegation to the meeting included Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh, Minister of Public Works and Housing Abdul Hadi Majali, Information Minister Marwan Muasher, Minister of Administrative Development Kamal Nasser and Ziyad Majali, head of the Jordanian representation office in Gaza.

The Palestinian side included Arafat adviser Mahmoud Abbas, PNA Cabinet Secretary Tayeb Abdul Rahim, Minister of Local Government Saeb Ureikat and Palestinian Ambassador to Jordan Omar Khatib.

King Hussein along with senior officials received and saw off Mr. Arafat, who was flown in and out on a Jordanian helicopter.

In remarks to the press

following Mr. Arafat's departure, Dr. Muasher said the visit was "very useful and was part of Mr. Arafat's efforts to end the deadlock in the peace process."

"Jordan, on this occasion, renewed its total support for the Palestinian (National) Authority and for all efforts aimed at reaching an accord on the redeployment of the Israeli army from Hebron," said the minister.

Dr. Muasher noted that Mr. Arafat's visit to Jordan came a few hours before U.S. mediator Dennis Ross was to arrive in the region in a bid to break the Palestinian-Israeli deadlock over Hebron.

Dr. Muasher said Jordan hoped that Mr. Ross would be successful in helping the two parties to reach a satisfactory agreement as soon as possible.

"We hope that the American envoy will quickly succeed in obtaining an agreement on Hebron and a commitment from all the parties to implement the agreed accords," Dr. Muasher told reporters.

Mr. Kabariti told reporters that Mr. Arafat's visit to Jordan was useful and fruitful and that Jordan and the PNA agreed on exerting every possible effort to ensure the success of the peace process and to give Mr. Ross the opportunity to resume his mediation.

Mr. Ross, the U.S. Middle East envoy, is due in Israel on Saturday.

An Israeli parliament member who met with Mr. Arafat was meanwhile quoted as saying that the Palestinian leader wanted

Mr. Ross replaced as peace talks mediator.

"He (Arafat) said he's ready for mediation or arbitration as long as it is not done by Dennis Ross," said Yossi Beilin, a key figure in peace talks that led to the breakthrough Israeli-Palestinian autonomy accords of 1993.

Mr. Beilin, whose Labour Party was ousted by hard-line Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in elections last May, met Mr. Arafat in the Gaza Strip on Friday.

Mr. Beilin, quoted by Reuters in a dispatch from occupied Jerusalem, said Mr. Arafat did not explain his objection to Mr. Ross.

"I said to him that that would be his biggest mistake, that the United States is the sponsor and Dennis Ross is its representative and even if he would like to have others, the best thing that he could do is to accept Ross as a mediator because that's the only way to make progress in the Hebron talks," Mr. Beilin told Reuters.

A Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) official said Mr. Ross would travel to Gaza upon landing in Israel for a meeting with Mr. Arafat late on Saturday. U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher put the onus on Mr. Arafat on Thursday, saying Israel had "made some moves" in talks on Hebron and it was up to the Palestinians to respond.

"The most important thing is that Mr. Ross has to be an accurate mediator and not to be biased on the side of Israel," Mr. Arafat said in Gaza on Friday.



His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday receives Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat upon his arrival here for a brief working visit (photo by Yusef Allan)

Saraireh submits resignation

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Minister of Telecommunications Jamal Saraireh on Saturday submitted his resignation from the 31-member Cabinet citing the prime minister's style of dealing with his colleagues as the reason for his move.

Mr. Saraireh said, in a telephone interview with the Jordan Times, that although he had no quarrel with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti's policies, he did not condone the premier's "haughty attitude" and his "disrespect for his colleagues."

"I support the government's policies. There is no doubt about that," Mr. Saraireh said. But, "it is the way Mr. Kabariti deals with his colleagues, (this) is the worst of treatments."

Sources close to the prime minister confirmed Mr. Saraireh had submitted a written resignation but



Jamal Saraireh

said Mr. Kabariti "has not decided whether to accept it or not."

The sources said that Mr. Saraireh had differed with the prime minister of the latter's decision to appoint Minister of State Mahmoud Hweimeh as acting minister of communications while he was on a visit to Egypt.

Mr. Saraireh said that Mr. Kabariti's style differed from former prime ministers under whom he served.

"They behaved like royalties," Mr. Saraireh said. "Unlike (Mr. Kabariti) who derides, disdains and looks down upon his colleagues."

Mr. Saraireh would not either explain or cite specific incidents. "For the time being, I resigned," he said.

Mr. Saraireh was appointed four times as a minister. The first time he became a minister was under Mudar Badran in 1989 when he was appointed as minister of telecommunications. He was re-appointed twice in the same post under Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker in 1991 and in 1995.

He maintained the same portfolio with the current government which took office last February.

Mr. Saraireh, who is a deputy from Karak, fully backed Mr. Kabariti during the riots that hit his hometown last August over the government's decision to modify the system of bread and fodder subsidies.

Kabariti pledges all possible assistance for cooperatives

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Saturday opened a two-day conference on cooperatives in Jordan and pledged all possible assistance to the cooperatives sector to help it overcome financial and other difficulties.

"The government has its own concepts for solutions to the problems facing Jordanian cooperatives and the Jordan Cooperative Organisation (JCO) but through this meeting it prefers to hear from the cooperative societies their own views, which are more important," said Mr. Kabariti.

"The government has submitted a draft law on the JCO to the legislation bureau at the prime ministry so that the legal committee can examine it before taking further steps towards putting it into force," he added.

The draft law, according to the prime minister, provides for further advantages and incentives to the cooperatives and a set of regulations governing their activities.

"We do not wish to see the cooperatives sector restricting its activities to agriculture alone. We would like to see cooperatives also in transport and housing sectors and serving

as an instrument for building the national economy and helping Jordan to become self-reliant," he said.

JCO Director General Khalid Tayeb told the opening session that nearly 50,000 Jordanian families were affiliated to cooperatives throughout the Kingdom.

Jordan has 800 cooperative societies which deal with agriculture, handicraft, housing and general services among other areas, with the JCO serving as an umbrella for their work with continued backing

(Continued on page 7)

Ross mission aims at convincing Arafat to sign Hebron deal without linking it to further moves

From Lamis Andoni in Boston

PRESIDENT BILL Clinton, who has come under international and domestic pressure to salvage the Middle East process, has asked special envoy Dennis Ross to present by Tuesday a detailed report on why the Israeli-Palestinian talks over Hebron are stalled, American sources said Saturday.

Mr. Ross, who was due to arrive in Israel on Saturday, was expected to present an assessment of the situation to enable the administration to decide on how to proceed to break the deadlock in the Middle East peace process, the official sources told the Jordan Times.

The sources expected Mr. Ross to reiterate U.S. dismay over Israel's settlement policy, and to urge the Palestinians to sign the Hebron agreement without waiting for a change in the Israeli stand. The American position, the sources said, reflects Washington's view that a continuity of the process was more crucial than freezing the process until Israel changed its policies.

In practice, the officials say, the American position will place the most of the pressure on the Palestinians to move the process forward.

Before Mr. Ross and his team departed Friday night, they contacted both the Israeli government and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat to calm anger on both sides generated by critical statements that were made by American officials last week. According to well-placed sources, American officials reiterated President Clinton's concern over Israeli policies but assured the Israelis that the aim was to move the process forward and not to single out the Israelis.

The sources said that administration officials had telephoned Mr. Arafat personally to assure him that recent American statements that blamed the Palestinians for the deadlock over the redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron, the administration told an angry Arafat that the U.S. did not mean to blame the Palestinians but to show that breaking the stalemate will need the cooperation of both sides, according to the sources.

Analysts and sources close to the administration said that the statements criticising the Palestinians over Hebron were necessary to balance the president's criticism of Israel that has created a mini crisis between the Israeli government and

(Continued on page 7)

Iraq says it is victim of U.S-Israeli conspiracy

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said on Saturday that it was the target of a plot between Washington and Israel after the discovery of an alleged U.S. spy network and an assassination attempt against President Saddam Hussein's eldest son.

"The intelligence services of the imperialists and Zionists are acting with hysteria and have resorted to immoral measures because their plans have failed" to topple the government, said the newspaper Al Iraq of the Kurdish party allied with Baghdad.

The uncovering of an alleged spy ring working in

Iraq for the United States was hailed as a victory by newspapers in Baghdad, which printed on their front pages the confessions of four accused spies shown on Iraqi television the night before.

"Our heroic intelligence services have put their hands on a bunch of spies," agents of American intelligence services unmasked by the sons of Iraq, were the respective headlines of Al Jumhuriya and Al Iraq newspapers.

In Washington, U.S. State Department Nicholas Burns ridiculed the reported discovery of the spy ring, calling it "a well-

noted and tired propaganda ploy."

Four Iraqis, including air force and navy officers, confessed on state television Friday that they had turned military information over to Iraqi Kurds working for the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA).

Their statements followed a government announcement earlier Friday that a spy ring working for the CIA had been uncovered.

The CIA, the United States' main intelligence arm abroad, refused comment on the charges.

The statements by the four men, according to Baghdad's Saturday news-

papers, confirmed Iraq's belief that the CIA was using all available means to spy on Iraq, including the use of international organisations with humanitarian covers.

"The most foolish dream the American administration ever had was to try and change the government of Iraq," Al Jumhuriya said.

"Their reserve of (Iraqi) gays and dogs proved to be of no use," it said, referring to Iraqis allegedly recruited by the CIA to spy on Iraq.

"They have tried all ways and means to topple the Iraqi government," said Al

(Continued on page 7)

Rebels free a few hostages but Lima embassy crisis drags on

LIMA (AFP) — The release of 38 of the 340 hostages being held by leftist rebels in the Japanese ambassador's residence here placed the ball in the government's court Saturday in negotiations to end the four-day standoff.

Talks remained deadlocked Saturday between the Peruvian government and Marxist rebels holding hundreds of hostages for four days Japanese ambassador's residence here.

Friday night rebels from the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) released 38 of roughly 340 hostages being held in the residence which they stormed late Tuesday.

"We believe that a gesture of this nature" could work

toward finding a "global solution" to the hostage crisis, the rebels said in a statement read by one of the hostages released Friday.

The government had no immediate response to the release and despite the "gesture," rebels showed no signs of surrendering peacefully.

"The only possible solution (to the crisis) is to meet our demands," the rebel statement said.

The MRTA's main demand is for the release of more than 400 of their jailed comrades, including the group's founder Victor Polay Campos who is serving a life sentence at a naval base in nearby Callao.

But the group apparently would be willing to lay down its arms permanently, according to the MRTA's current leader, Nestor Cerpa Carolini, who is among the rebels who stormed the embassy compound during a diplomatic reception, taking nearly 700 hostages.

The MRTA "is willing to lay down its arms" because "it accepts democracy, the privatisation of state-owned companies and the market economy," freed hostage Javier Sosa Nadal told CPN Radio. Sosa Nadal, who was released Friday, said he and other hostages had participated in a "round table meeting" with Mr. Cerpa

(Continued on page 7)

Arab-Americans urge pressure on Netanyahu

WASHINGTON (AP) — The United States should apply "public, sustained and unmistakable pressure" on Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government to revive the lagging Middle East peace process, prominent Arab-Americans said Friday.

President Bill Clinton was urged in an open letter to "personally and explicitly reaffirm the policy enunciated by numerous U.S. administrations that Israeli settlements in the occupied territories, including Jerusalem, are illegal and an obstacle to peace."

The letter released at a news conference by the American committee on Jerusalem praised Mr. Clinton for his remark earlier last week that the Israeli settlement policy was "not helpful" to peace. But it added that such policy clearly will not change without pressure on Mr. Netanyahu.

The United States has allowed Israel "to get away with murder," Jerusalem Committee Vice President Khalil E. Jahshan told reporters.

This is because both the Democratic White House and Republicans controlling Congress play domestic politics with the Arab-Israeli conflict. This encourages

Mr. Netanyahu to try to "have his cake and eat it" by pursuing peace with Arab governments but not the Palestinians, he said.

Mr. Jahshan, one of several signatories of the letter, is a Christian Palestinian-American who also heads the National Association of Arab-Americans.

On one occasion, he said, "the U.S. government and Mr. Clinton personally intervened and forgave Israel about \$275 million and deducted only \$61 million" from U.S. loan guarantees required by American law to be cut by the amount Israel spends on new settlements.

Commenting on the claim, a State Department official said deductions are adjusted under a complex formula.

Instead of requiring prompt implementation of the previous Israeli government's agreement to withdraw troops from Hebron on the West Bank, the Mr. Clinton administration "waived" and reopened talks, Mr. Jahshan continued.

Hebron withdrawal was part of an agreement signed by the former government on behalf of the Israeli people, witnessed and guaranteed by the United States, he said. "Our job should have been to enforce, not to waive," he said, suggesting

such behaviour encourages Israel's new right-wing leaders "not to respect or take seriously the U.S. government."

Mr. Jahshan criticised a Dec. 17 letter sent Mr. Netanyahu by Senator Jesse Helms and Representative Ben Gilman, Republican chairmen of the powerful congressional committees overseeing U.S. foreign relations. They called the letter a case of "playing domestic politics, trying to embarrass the president of the United States."

In it, Mr. Helms and Mr. Gilman declared "there are voices who insist that it is incumbent upon the State of Israel to make all the sacrifices for peace. Do not count us among such people."

Such a letter "is going to harm Israeli citizens" more than help, Mr. Jahshan said. "If Israel wants long-term security and legitimacy in the region there is no alternative to genuine peace with its neighbours, Palestinians and other Arabs in the area."

"As Arab-Americans, we have to respect the will of the Israeli people when they have elections," Mr. Jahshan said. "The United States of America as a sponsor of the peace process must hold Israel accountable."

Social Development

FATINA Kabariti, wife of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, accompanied by the wives of the speaker of the Lower House of Parliament and other ministers on Saturday visit the Queen Alia Fund for Social Development.

They were briefed by Princess Basma Centre for Women Affairs Director General Farah Daghistani on the centre's activities to enable Jordanian women to take part in decision-making process at all levels.



Beirut confirms arrests after attack on Syrians

BEIRUT (AFP) — The Lebanese government said Saturday it had freed most of the people arrested since an armed anti-Syrian attack north of Beirut earlier in the week. "Most of the people arrested were released after interrogation," said Attorney General Adnan Addum.

"Some troublemakers have recently stepped up the distribution of tracts inciting sectarian conflicts and damaging Lebanon's relations with friendly and brother countries," Mr. Addum said in a statement.

"They have taken their actions one step further by throwing grenades and shooting at a civilian bus, killing and wounding two of its passengers," said Mr. Addum, referring to Wednesday's armed attack on a Syrian-registered minibus north of Beirut.

"Given these facts and to maintain security, a judicial inquiry was launched so as to

uncover the wrong-doers and to punish them," he added.

Dory Chamoun, leader of the opposition National Liberal Party (NLP), told AFP on Friday that between 40 and 50 people were arrested after unidentified gunmen raked the minibus with automatic weapons on the Beirut-Tripoli highway, killing the driver and injuring a passenger.

Mr. Chamoun said most of those arrested were supporters of the disbanded Lebanese Forces militia of General Michel Aoun, who headed a military government from 1988 to 1990 before being driven into exile in France.

The disbanded Lebanese Forces militia of jailed former warlord Samir Geagea on Saturday released a statement accusing the security services of "having arrested, without arrest warrants, hundreds of our supporters and associates of Mr. Chamoun and General Aoun."

Sudan pleased with U.N. delay on sanctions move

KHARTOUM (AFP) — The Sudanese government said on Saturday it was pleased that the United Nations had delayed a decision on imposing an air traffic embargo on international flights in Sudan.

In New York on Thursday the U.N. Security Council postponed a decision because it wanted more information about the humanitarian impact of such sanctions.

Sudanese Foreign Minister Ali Osman Mohammad Taha said there was "concern within the U.N. Security Council about the humanitarian impact of these sanctions on innocent people who need the services of Sudan Airways."

The minister said Sudan Airways provided a "vital service" linking various parts of the country and because of maintenance requirements, it was difficult

to separate international and domestic flights, the Sudanese press reported.

In August, the Security Council gave Sudan a three-month ultimatum to hand over to Ethiopia three militants wanted in connection with the failed bid to assassinate Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in June 1995.

Sudan denies any involvement in the Addis Ababa attack as well as charges that it is giving the wanted militants refuge. "All the members of the Security Council are perfectly aware that none of the wanted suspects are still in Sudan and the council finds itself in a difficult situation that it is trying to get out of," the minister said.

France, Russia and China are opposed to trade embargoes while the United States and Britain are inclined to favour them.

Erbakan calls for closure of casinos

ANKARA (R) — Turkey's Islamist Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said on Friday the country's casinos would be closed and a public lottery discontinued because of concerns about their demoralising effect on Turkish society.

"They have begun to spread to every corner of Turkey like an illness," Mr. Erbakan told reporters ahead of a cabinet meeting at which the future of the gaming industry was expected to be discussed.

The tourism ministry has been considering proposals in the last three months to exclude Turks from gaming establishments or outlaw the sector entirely.

Government pressure for complete closure appeared to be gathering earlier this week when Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller said she wanted the country's 76 casinos shut down.

The current initiative is the culmination of a series of restrictions on opening hours and dress imposed by the Islamist-led government since coming to power in June.

It has had limited success in imposing a previous order to exclude Turks from casinos. This Interior Ministry order did not have the force of law behind it.

Tourism ministry officials say work on plans to limit casinos to three designated areas is continuing despite the current initiative. An island near Istanbul and various tourist resorts are among recommended locations.

Rafsanjani's daughter says Turkish women are not free

ANKARA (AFP) — Faezeh Rafsanjani, the daughter of Iranian President Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, suggested that Turkish women were not as "free" as Iranian women, in an interview published by the Turkish newspaper Sabah on Saturday.

Faezeh Rafsanjani, who is accompanying her father on a four-day official trip to Turkey, said "the situation of Turkish women is similar to that of Iranian women before the revolution. Before the Islamic revolution, Iranian women were not free."

She added that she thought that Iranian women were "happier now."

She also praised the "greater integration" of Iranian women in social life and the "increasing education" of Iranian girls following the 1979 revolution which installed a regime based on Islamic principles in Iran.

Faezeh Rafsanjani also denounced "Turkish laws which do not allow veiled women to take part in university life."

Since the official visit began on Thursday, several Turkish newspapers have published photographs of the Iranian president's wife and daughters dressed in black chadors to emphasise

the difference between Iranian women and Turkish women. Turkish women wear Western clothes.

In its Saturday edition, Sabah thanked Mustafa Kemal Atatürk for founding a modern, secular state and urged "look at Iranian women."

Another comparison made by Faezeh Rafsanjani between Turkey and Iran prompted a strong reaction on Friday from Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller, a senior member of the right-wing True Path Party (DYP), the Islamic government's coalition partner.

"Ankara is like Iran in the last years of the Shah," Faezeh Rafsanjani, who is president of Iran's National Olympic Committee, said during a meeting on Thursday with Turkish Sports Minister Bahattin Seker.

The DYP "firmly condemned" these statements, the head of the DYP parliamentary group, Ali Riza Gonul, said during a press conference on Friday.

"We feel that a visitor should respect the hospitality that she has received... These statements are extremely wounding. We protest strongly," he added.

Hizbollah mourns 2 guerrillas

TYRE (AFP) — The Iranian-backed Hizbollah said Saturday two of its guerrillas were killed during clashes with Israeli troops in South Lebanon two days ago, raising to four the number of the group's casualties in a week.

A Hizbollah statement said Mohammad Kamel Abbas, 19, and Zein Al Abideen Yassin, 20, were killed "while carrying out their jihad (holy battle) for the liberation of our territories during confrontations in the Iqlim Al Tuffah last Thursday."

Funerals were held for the "martyrs" at midday, the statement said.

On Wednesday, Israeli jets and artillery struck South Lebanon, wounding two civilians, after a Hizbollah attack into the occupied border zone that left Israeli General Eli Amital slightly wounded.

It is the second time in less than a week that Gen. Amital is hurt by Hizbollah fire. The general and a soldier were injured and two guerrillas were killed during clashes in and around the border area over the last weekend.

Turks pessimistic over state-gangland scandal

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkey's president will meet party leaders at a rare summit on a scandal over suspected state-gangland links, but the general mood in the country is so gloomy that few have faith anything will be resolved.

President Suleyman Demirel's office said he would gather on Sunday the leaders of the political parties represented in parliament, including Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, his deputy Tansu Ciller and main opposition leader Mesut Yilmaz.

Mr. Demirel, who generally distances himself from the political scene, publicly stepped in after the furor created by a crash last month in which a wanted gangster, a top policeman and a Mafia moll died in the same car.

Sedat Bucak, a govern-

ment deputy leading a Kurdish clan paid by the state to fight separatist Kurdish rebels, was in the car but escaped with minor injuries.

Political analysts, initially hopeful that the crash would force a real investigation into allegations of shady business within the state, now accuse the government of wanting to cover up the scandal and Mr. Demirel for being ineffectual.

"On the other side, it is even worse. The main opposition leader, for more than a month, has been bragging that he has 'documented proof'...but he does not, or cannot, produce them," wrote columnist Oktay Eksi in the mass-selling Hurriyet daily, referring to ANAP leader Yilmaz.

The interior and justice

ministries, a number of prosecutors and a parliamentary commission are investigating the crash.

But a poll commissioned by an opposition deputy appeared to reflect the general mood of pessimism among the public.

Some 75.8 per cent of those questioned in a survey of 2,000 people believed they lived in an unpredictable, shocking and unstable environment. And few believed any political party could lead them out of the mess.

This week a prosecutor seeking to open the way for legal action against former Interior Minister Mehmet Agar through lifting his parliamentary immunity withdrew from the case in disgust after his bid was rejected on technical grounds and the chief prosecutor ordered to rewrite

the report.

Mr. Agar quit his post after the crash but remains a deputy. The prosecutor, Nihat Artiran, had accused Mr. Agar of having signed a false police identity document for the dead gangster, Abdullah Catli, allegedly used by officials to kill political opponents.

Six weeks after the crash, only one person has been brought to trial — the lorry driver who caused it.

"No significant progress has been made so far," said Bilal Cetin, political analyst at the liberal Yeni Yuzuil daily.

"The Justice Ministry's attitude towards the lifting of immunities and a lack of confidence in the impartiality of the interior ministry's investigation gives credence to the worries of the public and the opposition," he said.

Since the crash, the media and opposition have alleged that leading officials directed hit squads — made up of members from state-paid tribes such as Bucak's clan or the likes of Catli — to kill rebel Kurd sympathisers, leftists and business rivals.

The public was shocked further last month when Mrs. Ciller defended Catli, saying anyone firing or suffering wounds from bullets for the state was a hero.

And Mr. Demirel, despite his public efforts, has shied away from accusing anyone and repeatedly warns that state interests should not be damaged because of individual abuses.

His calls for the public to trust in the judiciary and other democratic processes have begun to fall on deaf ears.

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PROGRAMME TWO

14:05 Jonny Quest
14:30 You Bet Your Life
15:00 Cajo
15:30 Week-Ends Specials
16:00 Doc. — World Echo
16:30 The Famous Five (Drama)
17:00 News Flash
17:02 Doc. — Our World, Their World
17:15 Doc. — All the Children
18:00 Magazine — Fast Pas Review
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Sports Et Musique
19:30 News Headlines
19:35 Fresh Prince of Bel-Air
20:00 Auto-Classics
20:30 The Album Show
21:10 Doc. — Hold Up the Sun
22:00 News in English
22:25 Drama — Cover
23:15 Miami Vice
23:59 Yes, Minister?

PRAYER TIMES

05:04 Fajr
06:27 (Sunrise) Duha
11:34 Dhuhur
14:18 'Asr
16:40 Maghreb
18:03 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifeth, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church Tel. 632785
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Deserts.....03/17	Civil Defence Emergency.....630341	The Islamic, Abdali.....666126/37	07:15.....Tel Aviv (LY)
Jordan Valley.....10/22	Rescue Police.....192, 621111, 637777	Al-Ahli, Abdali.....664164/6	07:35.....Damascus, London (BA)
Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 14, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 69 per cent, Aqaba 50 per cent.	Fire Brigade.....617101	Italian, Al-Muhajreen.....777101/3	13:30.....Doha (GF)
	Blood Bank.....775121	Al-Bashir.....775111/26	16:35.....Moscow (SU)
	Highway Police.....843402	Army, Marka.....891611/15	21:25.....Cairo (MS)
	Traffic Police.....896390	Queen Alia Hospital.....602240/50	
	Public Security Dept.....630321	Amal Hospital.....674155	Royal Wing (RW) Flights
	Hotel Complaints.....605800	The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery.....365199	09:50 Aqaba (RW) (departing from Marka Airport)
	Price Complaints.....661176	ZARQA:	20:30 Aqaba (RW)
	Water & Sewerage Complaints.....897467	ZARQA: Govt. Hospital.....(09)983323	
	Amman Municipality Complaints.....787111	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	HAJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN
AMMAN:	Telephone Information (directory assistance).....121	ZARQA Govt. Hospital.....(09)983323	Dep. Amman.....8:00 a.m. every Monday
Dr. Hanna Mansour.....750197	Overseas Calls.....010230	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	Air Damascus.....5:00 p.m. every Monday
Dr. Sa'id Tawfiq.....788285	Central Amman Telephone Repairs.....623101	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	Dep. Damascus.....7:30 a.m. every Sunday
Dr. Afif Shukri.....898863	Abdali Tel. Repairs.....661101	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	Air Amman.....5:00 p.m. every Sunday
Dr. Nidal Al Dahleh.....827195	Jordan Television.....773111	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Firas pharmacy.....661912	Radio Jordan.....774111	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Ferdows pharmacy.....778336	Water Authority.....680100	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Al Asema pharmacy.....637055	J. Electricity Authority.....815615	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Nairook pharmacy.....623672	Electric Power Co.....636381	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Al Salam pharmacy.....636730	RJ Flight Information.....08-53200	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Yacoub pharmacy.....644945	Queen Alia Int'l. Airport 08-53200	ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Shmeisani pharmacy.....637660		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Najib pharmacy.....847632		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
IRBID:		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Dr. Mazen Abu Bakir.....276852		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Al Quds pharmacy.....(—)		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
ZARQA:		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Dr. Rafiq Atallah.....994424		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Khalifeh pharmacy.....985417		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
EMERGENCIES		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Food Control Centre.....637111		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Civil Defence Department.....661111		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
Civil Defence Immediate Rescue		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	
		ZARQA National Hospital.....(09)900560	

07:15.....Tel Aviv (LY)	20:30.....Cairo (MS)
07:35.....Damascus, London (BA)	21:10.....Istanbul (TK)
13:30.....Doha (GF)	23:50.....London, Beirut (BA)
16:35.....Moscow (SU)	01:25.....Amsterdam, Beirut (KL)
21:25.....Cairo (MS)	

Royal Wing (RW) Flights	DEPARTURES
09:50 Aqaba (RW) (departing from Marka Airport)	Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
20:30 Aqaba (RW)	06:20.....Beirut (RJ)
	08:40.....Frankfurt (RJ)
	10:15.....Paris (add) (RJ)
	10:30.....Paris (add) (RJ)
	11:00.....Tunis (RJ)
	11:05.....Vienna (RJ)
	11:15.....Rome (RJ)
	11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
	12:15.....London (RJ)
	12:20.....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
	14:00.....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
	19:45.....Sanaa (add) (RJ)
	20:30.....Jeddah (RJ)
	21:15.....New Delhi (RJ)
	21:45.....Damascus (RJ)
	22:00 Abu Dhabi, Kuala Lumpur (add) (RJ)
	22:10.....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
	22:20.....Singapore, Jakarta (RJ)
	22:15.....Abu Dhabi, Dhaka (RJ)
	22:45.....Bangkok (RJ)
	22:45.....Sanaa (RJ)
	23:30.....Cairo (RJ)
	23:20.....Jeddah (RJ)
	04:00.....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
	04:00.....Jeddah (add) (RJ)
	Other Flights
	06:20.....Tel Aviv (LY)
	12:40.....Bahrain (GF)
	15:20.....Moscow (SU)
	15:30.....Dubai (EK)
	20:10.....Beirut (ME)

HAJAZ RAILWAY TRAIN	MARKET PRICES
Dep. Amman.....8:00 a.m. every Monday	Upper/lower price in fils per kg.
Air Damascus.....5:00 p.m. every Monday	Apple.....700/500
Dep. Damascus.....7:30 a.m. every Sunday	Banana.....550/550
Air Amman.....5:00 p.m. every Sunday	Banana (imported).....850/600
	Cabbage.....70/50
	Carrot.....300/150
	Cauliflower.....130/100
	Cucumber (large).....120/80
	Cucumber (small).....270/180
	Eggplant.....150/80
	Garlic.....850/600
	Grape fruit.....150/100
	Lemon.....400/300
	Marrow (large).....80/40
	Marrow (small).....140/100
	Onion (green).....160/100
	Onion (dry).....170/80
	Orange.....580/400
	Pepper (hot).....240/150
	Pepper (sweet).....240/150
	Potato.....270/160
	Spinach.....140/100
	String Bean.....380/300
	Tomato.....150/120

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel. (08)53200-5, where it should always be verified. Information on other flights can be supplied on



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Home News

Political Party Congress issues resolutions, opposes normalisation of economic, cultural ties with Israel

By Khalil Shobaki
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The 60 Arab political parties which took part last week in the Arab Political Party Congress issued recommendations and resolutions pledging to oppose normalisation of relations with Israel at the cultural, educational and economic levels and calling on Arab leaders to convene a summit meeting to study ways of confronting what they described as Israel's expansionist and aggressive policies.

Meeting in Amman, the conference participants stressed the need to exert political and economic pressure on Israel to end the Judaisation drive in Jerusalem and the building of settlements in the Golan Heights, South Lebanon and occupied Palestine.

They also called for the withdrawal of foreign military forces in the region, urged the revival of the Arab Defence Pact, criticised the U.S. for continuing the sanctions on Iraq, Libya and Sudan and praised France for its stand in support of Arab rights.

Conference Chairman and former Minister of Interior Suleiman Arar, Saturday described the parties' conference, its first, as having achieved excellent results not only for Jordan, but for the whole Arab nation.

Mr. Arar, who is also secretary general of Jordan's Al Mustakbal Party (the conference sponsors), told the press that "the meeting has proved that Jordan and its leadership are determined to pursue the course of democracy, and that despite its size the Kingdom is great, due to its sacrifices for the Arab Nation, and has won the respect of all political parties in the Arab World."

At its closing session the conference elected Mr. Arar as secretary general and elected a committee to follow up on the implementation of the conference's resolutions and recommendations.

The committee has been entrusted also to contact political parties which were not able to attend the three-day meeting to involve them in future activities.

The conference's secretariat decided on the following points:

- 1 - Fixing an annual subscription for each party at JD 700 to be paid within three months from now.
- 2 - Issuing a scientific quarterly tackling various pan-

Arab issues, and a monthly gazette on various party activities in order to enhance coordination among them.

- 3 - Drawing up a code of honour for parties in the Arab World and the preparation of internal bylaws and regulations for the congress.
- 4 - Distribution of the final communiqué of the conference which included resolutions and recommendations to all Arab trade and professional organisations.
- 5 - Issuing an annual guidebook for Arab parties.
- 6 - Publishing the proceedings of the conference.
- 7 - Opening a headquarters for the conference's secretariat in Amman by 1997.

Mr. Arar said that the nine-member secretariat will hold meetings in Amman every three months.

He said the conference cost JD30,000 and was financed by Al Mustakbal Party together with donations from Jordanian banks and firms.

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Ministry of Interior issues revised regulations concerning rental cars

By Nadia Muklis
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Ministry of Interior Saturday issued new regulations concerning rental car businesses not long after a study showed that 30 per cent of rented cars have been involved in road accidents in the first eight months of 1996.

The study was conducted by the Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents.

The regulations stipulate that all new licences for rental car offices must be approved by the Minister of Interior himself, and that all car rental offices should be equipped with a minimum 10 fully insured cars and sufficient parking lot space.

According to the regulations, a car rental office should be owned by a Jordanian, above 25 years of

age with a least a high school degree. The new rules demand that car rental offices be located in either hotels, airports, harbors or any touristic ground the Ministry of Interior authorises. They must also be located away from any intersection by at least 50 metres and distant from religious, school or military buildings by a minimum of 200 metres.

All new licensed offices must produce financial guarantee of JD 10,000, renewable annually two weeks prior to its expiration date.

The rental agencies are allowed to lease cars only to persons with a valid drivers licence. The regulations further stipulate that Jordanian car rental customers should be above 25 years of age, have a valid Jordanian drivers licence and a certificate of good

conduct from the nearest police station.

A rented car should be driven only by the client, the regulations said.

Car rental offices will be required to make a copy of the passports of all leases. If regulations are not complied with, penalties will be imposed, the ministry said.

"There is nothing new in the regulations," Sa'ed Ghnaim, owner of Philadelphia Rent-A-Car said. "The new measures are those concerning Jordanian customers only," he added.

"Why the exception of Jordanians in those laws?" Mr. Ghnaim asked.

When a person holds a drivers licence applicable to certain vehicles, he should be able to drive all those vehicles, including touristic rental cars, Mr. Ghnaim said.

He said he believes that the criteria for obtaining a drivers licence should be toughened and therefore difficulties can be avoided later. Although the regulations stipulated the location of the rent-a-car offices, its provisions were not observed, Mr. Ghnaim said, therefore we can see 3-4 offices in one building making the competition very steep.

According to Jordanian Society for the Prevention of Road Accidents President Mohammad Dabbas, 250 car rental offices are operating more than 3,500 cars in the Kingdom, and of those vehicles, 30 per cent have been involved in car accidents. The study conducted by the society showed that more than 1,250 rental cars have been involved in road accidents in the first eight months of this year.

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Company offers JD10,000 for information regarding theft

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Owners of a tyre company in Amman Saturday stated that they are offering a reward for anyone with information regarding a trailer and its shipment, stolen near the Zarqa Free Zone last month.

"We are offering a JD 10,000 for any information that could lead us or authorities to our stolen trailer," Ayman Ramadan, an employee of World Tyre Company (WTC) said.

The trailer and its shipment, according to Mr. Ramadan, worth an estimated

JD75,000, were stolen on Nov. 30, 1996 from a parking lot near the Zarqa Free Zone area.

"We have informed authorities and placed several advertisements in daily and weekly newspapers but, so far, we have not received any information regarding the stolen trailer or its load," Mr. Ramadan said.

The shipment, he said, consisted of 450 tyres worth JD 40,000 which were not insured. However, he stated, that the trailer, which was purchased two months prior to the incident, was insured.

According to Mr. Ramadan, the trailer's driver,

Jamal Mohammad, 45, had arrived from Aqaba to the Zarqa Free Zone at approximately 7:00 p.m. on Nov. 30 and parked the trailer near the free zone.

"[Mr. Mohammad] told us that, after locking and securing the trailer, he was about to catch a taxi to go home but was approached by two men who asked him about space and availability at the Aqaba Free Zone, as he had just come from there," Mr. Ramadan said.

The two men then offered to give the trailer driver a ride to his house, Mr. Ramadan maintained, and "on the way, the two gave him orange

juice to drink, "which probably contained stupeficients."

"The driver, suffering from fractures and bruises, was found unconscious at around 3:00 a.m. the following day near Hashveieh Intersection in Zarqa," he said.

Nothing was stolen from Mr. Mohammad, who was carrying a small amount of money, except the trailer keys, said Mr. Ramadan.

"We have mobilised, in addition to the police, several employees from our company to search for the stolen trailer, and we hope that those responsible for the theft will be apprehended," he concluded.

"We need a teachers' union in Jordan," said another Jordanian ICET member. "Everybody has [one], why not us?" she asked, touching one of the current issues of national concern and debate.

A general theme of the conference was the need for developed and developing countries to invest more energy and financial resources in education.

Acknowledging the existence of an "educational spending gap," the final deliberations on the fourth and last topic of the conference, "Capitalising on International Collaboration for School Reform," stated that, while developed countries spend more on higher education, developing countries focus more on educating children.

However, the conference stressed the need for improving facilities at every level. "There is a need to incorporate modern technological information systems such as the Internet to promote understanding among students of the glob-

al village," said Rapporteur Hani Abdul Rahman, from the University of Jordan.

The list of distinguished participants to the conference included: Saudi Arabia's Deputy Minister of Education Khaled Awad, ICET Director Abdullah Kobaisi from Qatar, Omani Minister of Higher Education Yahya Manthri, Jordanian Minister of Education Munther Masri, Director General at the Ministry of Education Said Asaf from Palestine, Qatari Minister of Education Mohammed Abdul Rahim Kafoud, Jordanian Minister of Higher Education Abdullah Ensour, Minister of Education Fakhruddin Radwanovich from Bosnia Herzegovina, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) Senior Advisor Labiba Salah, UNESCO's International Bureau of Education Director Juan Carlos Tedesco.

Describing the ICET Amman conference as "most successful," ICET outgoing President Nelly Maia said "each country has its own reality, and it is impossible to set standardised reforms."

But the conference achieved its main goal, Dr. Maia told the Jordan Times, as participants "exchanged their experiences in education and were mutually enriched."

The conference appointed Bahraini Ambassador to France and Former Minister of Education and Health Ali Fakhro as the new ICET President.

the Environment" by several artists at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 30.

"Works of small paintings by Jordanian and Arab artists at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 687598), until Jan. 14.

* Water colour works by Jabbar Mijbil entitled "Declared Hunches" at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Dec. 25.

* Works by ten contemporary Indonesian artists entitled "From Scripts to Abstraction" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (open daily except Tuesdays), until Jan. 12.

* Works by several artists entitled "The Artist and

International educators urge substantive changes on national and global levels

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Think globally and act locally" was the message hundreds of international educators, academics and decision-makers Saturday launched, at the conclusion of the 1996 International Council on Education for Teaching (ICET) 43rd World Assembly.

Teaching must become a vehicle "to infuse new values and promote international as well as global interaction and cooperation, so as to achieve a high level of universality which simplifies personal interactions," read the final recommendations of the symposium.

With a focus on "Teacher Education and School Reform," the assembly stressed the need for "re-examining [and] reforming [educational systems] and putting [them] in a global cooperative context."

"In order to develop a national school system, countries should be open to global concerns, trends and issues, while appreciating the local variables in their endeavours to make school reform meaningful and manageable," final deliberations of the conference stated.

From the reports presented during the sessions related to "Enhancing Values in School Reform," "openness" was identified as the key-value to be imparted to children so that they can evolve into persons of peace and responsible citizens.

"Openness to participation, openness to diversity,

openness to conflict, openness to reflection, openness to mistakes," are the main values to instil in the students for democracy, rapporteur to the plenary closing session, Anwar Said from the University of Jordan, told participants.

Calling on educators and ministers of education to establish "democratic schools," Dr. Said stressed that "society must believe in change and that change must take place in schools, therefore, players of the reform game, (i.e. teachers and decision-makers), must represent all groups of society, no matter how big or small."

National curricula, democratically prepared, must be open to global concerns, such as the environment, AIDS, terrorism, refugees and poverty, he said.

Subsequent to Dr. Said's report regarding ideas covered during the sessions dedicated to the role of values in education, another rapporteur, Majed Abu Jaber from Mu'ta University, presented the main recommendations which were summarised from the various studies, papers and articles presented on the second of the four topics of the conference, "Fostering Partnership in School Reform."

The conference advocated partnership between ministries of education, universities, and other educational institutions should be established and/or enhanced to achieve better quality teacher education.

"It has also been suggested that concerned parties form a higher council to plan a general policy for

this partnership," added ICET Director and Associate Dean at the Faculty of Graduate Studies of the University of Jordan Kamal Dawani.

As, in view of the new requirements imposed by development and globalisation, educational systems must be updated, teacher education and professional training must be improved to meet the new challenges facing educators, he said.

"It is crystal clear that the success and failure of educational reform, even after all other conditions have been fulfilled, lies in the hands of teachers," ICET's final communiqué stated on the third topic of the conference, "Preparing Teachers for School Reform."

Seminar to cover management of Azraq Basin

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A one-day environment workshop on integrated environmental management of the Azraq Basin will take place here Monday.

It will mark the achievements of the Azraq Oasis Conservation Project and discuss multi-disciplinary techniques used to address the environmental degradation which threatened to destroy this historical water source.

Participating in the workshop, to be co-hosted by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Azraq Oasis Conservation Project will be government officials, representatives of non-governmental organisations and environmental experts.

Ghaith Fariz, head of the Azraq project's management unit and keynote speaker at the workshop's opening ceremony told the Jordan Times that the event

"aims to demonstrate the success of the environmental rehabilitation programme in Azraq to the international community and highlight it as an example which could be emulated in other parts of Jordan and in other arid regions of the world."

"The workshop will also address the issue of sustainability. Since the UNDP-funded Azraq Oasis Conservation Project began its work two and a half years ago, it has successfully managed to rehabilitate a big part of the oasis, but there is still more to do, and methods of ensuring preservation of the newly replenished ecosystem need to be explored," Mr. Fariz continued.

In 1977 the Azraq Basin was granted protection and reserve status. According to a statement issued by the UN resident coordinator in Jordan, over the years, pumping of water for municipal and agricultural uses had escalated "to an

alarming rate of 50 million cubic metres per year — twice its (the oasis') natural rechargeable capacity — causing the ecosystem to collapse."

The lakes, marshes and springs dried up, and foliage and wildlife disappeared.

CONCERT

An evening of harp music by Nuria Llopis Arney at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

EXHIBITIONS

Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.
Christmas special at the Jordan River Designs

WHAT'S GOING ON

showroom (hand-made ornaments and decoration), Jabal Amman, First Circle (Tel. 613081/2), until Dec. 31.
* Works by Spanish painter Clara Amado at Instituto Cervantes, Jabal Amman until 15 Jan.
* Exhibition of colourful gifts and crafts designed by Andrea Atalla at the Jordan Design and Trade Centre of Noor Al Hussein Foundation, Wadi Sagra Street (Tel. 699141/2), until Jan. 10.
* Works by several artists entitled "The Artist and

the Environment" by several artists at Alia Art Gallery, Jabal Amman, until Dec. 30.
* Works of small paintings by Jordanian and Arab artists at Baladna Art Gallery, Gardens St. (Tel. 687598), until Jan. 14.
* Water colour works by Jabbar Mijbil entitled "Declared Hunches" at Orfali Art Gallery, Umm Utheina, until Dec. 25.
* Works by ten contemporary Indonesian artists entitled "From Scripts to Abstraction" at the Jordan National Gallery of Fine Arts (open daily except Tuesdays), until Jan. 12.
* Works by several artists entitled "The Artist and

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Afghan bombing raid kills 8

MIR BACHA KOT (Agencies) — A single plane dropped two bombs on the Afghan village of Mir Bacha Kot, some 20 kilometres north of Kabul Friday, killing eight people and wounding 12, according to residents.

Mir Bacha Kot is held by the Islamic Taliban militia who took over the capital in September.

"The plane came over at 9.30 a.m. (0500 GMT) and dropped two bombs on a house full of refugees," said one resident Saturday.

He said the dead and wounded were all from one extended family which had fled from the fighting in their home village of Istalif 10 kilometres further north. It is often impossible to ascertain the exact number of dead and wounded in Afghanistan as the dead are buried quickly in accordance with Islamic Law and minor injuries are frequently left untreated.

Locals assumed the plane had come from the northern opposition to the Taliban which comprises the forces of the ousted government, northern Uzbek leader General Abdul Rashid Dostum, and followers of Shi'ite leader Karim Khalili.

Mir Bacha Kot lies some 10 kilometres behind the front line between the Taliban and the opposition

alliance. Residents said there had been at least 10 air-raids by opposition planes trying to hit Taliban heavy gun emplacements in the area.

Residents of villages close to the fighting have been fleeing the area and moving towards Kabul.

On Saturday trucks carrying entire families and all their belongings were travelling out of the conflict zone to the capital. Previously thriving markets in the area were empty.

The Taliban are holding a low line of hills that bisect the broad Shomali Valley running north of Kabul. Despite numerous attempts by the opposition to dislodge them, the front lines have remained largely static for the last seven weeks.

Over the last week there has been little fighting on the front line, with only light exchanges of artillery and rocket fire.

Meanwhile senior Taliban officials were quoted as saying Saturday that at least 50 refugees displaced by factional fighting in northwestern Afghanistan have died of cold over the past few weeks.

Mulla Yar Mohammad, governor of the Taliban-held western Herat city, which has been flooded by tens of thousands of refugees fleeing fighting in

people had died of exposure recently, a report said.

Calling for immediate assistance from the United Nations and other aid agencies to ease the refugees' suffering, the governor told the Afghan Islamic Press (AIP) that the latest casualties included 10 children, three men and three women.

AIP, a private news agency based in the western Pakistani city of Peshawar, said heavy snow lashed Badghis, Faryab and western Herat provinces, claiming a total of 50 lives since mid-November.

U.N. sources here said fighting which erupted in late October between the Taliban militia and the combined forces of Uzbek warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum and ex-government Commander Ahmad Shah Massoud, left around 50,000 people homeless.

The predominantly ethnic Pashtun refugees from Badghis were sheltered in three camps set up by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Herat city.

But amid an unabated displacement at the rate of 700 to 800 people a day, many uprooted Afghans congregated elsewhere in Herat located on the Iranian border.

U.N. sources said the death toll given by the

Taliban was "quite possible", given the inaccessibility and the remoteness of the troubled northwestern region.

"We have done a lot of distribution" since the exodus started, a spokesman for UNHCR said, adding that the agency had so far sent several convoys loaded with relief goods.

The UNHCR sent another convoy this month as the refugees were still coming, but the rate has slowed down. Afghan sources said the fighting almost died down because of cold and heavy snow near the front-lines.

The Herat governor complained the pace of aid distribution from the U.N. agencies and non-governmental organisations was "not fast" and the supplies were not sufficient.

"The uprooted people cannot resist" the extreme cold weather for long, he said warning that "there are fears of heavy casualties" among them.

The Taliban authorities have provided \$20,000 for the purchase of fuel oil for the refugees, he said.

AIP said Mr. Yar Mohammad asked the U.N. agencies and other aid organisations to urgently extend humanitarian assistance to the refugees who need food, fuel, tents, blankets and medicines.



An Italian woman lays down a flower under a poster of the late Marcello Mastroianni at the Trevi Fountain in Rome (AFP photo)

Mastroianni's body arrives in Rome

ROME (AFP) — The body of Italian cinema great Marcello Mastroianni arrived from Paris at Rome's Fiumicino Airport Saturday, an airport source said.

A small gathering of friends and family, including his brothers Franco, also an actor, and director Sergio, were waiting to meet the coffin at the airport.

The actor's body, escorted by a guard of honour, was then transported through central Rome to be displayed in a public mortuary chapel in the capitol.

Mastroianni, who died of cancer in Paris Thursday at the age of 72, will be buried in Rome Sunday alongside his mother and brother, Ruggero.

The chapel was to remain open Saturday and Sunday to allow thousands of Italians to pay their last respects to the cinema great best remembered for his leading role in the Federico Fellini film *La Dolce Vita*.

Rome Mayor Francesco Rutelli will preside over a ceremony Sunday and then the funeral cortege will wind its way to the Del Verano Cemetery, the largest in the city.

On Friday hundreds of mourning fans from all over Europe packed the Parisian Church of St. Sulpice to pay their last respects to Mastroianni.

Snatches of soundtracks from the actor's best-loved films echoed through the church during a simple memorial service to the actor whose career spanned half a century.

"He was a giant of European cinema ... and played a significant role in the cinema of the world," said French Culture Minister Philippe Douste-Blazy arriving at the church in Paris' left bank.

Mastroianni, a long-term Fellini collaborator who acted in more than 100 films between 1947 and 1996, died in the early hours of Thursday morning after a lengthy battle against pancreatic cancer.

Europe's film fans said farewell to Mastroianni Friday with a flood of tributes and thanks for 40 years of romance, comedy and soulful charm.

"Those who love Italy and love the cinema feel an immense pain, a terrible loss," said France's former Culture Minister Jack Lang. "He was emblematic of contemporary Italy."

"Without him, the history of the contemporary European cinema is simply inconceivable," said the British newspaper the Independent. "Marcello Mastroianni was the most sheerly indispensable film star of the entire post-war period."

Italians, preparing to bury the actor who

symbolised both common man and Latin lover to two generations, placed banners and flowers at Rome's Trevi Fountain, where he frolicked with statuesque Anita Ekberg in *La Dolce Vita* (The Sweet Life) — one of the most unforgettable scenes in cinema history.

American actress Shirley MacLaine, who starred alongside Mastroianni in 1991's *Used People*, told the Italian news media: "We've lost a treasure. But now he'll be making them laugh in paradise."

Madrid's El Pais quoted another co-star, actress Marisa Paredes: "Who has not at one time loved Mastroianni? This humanity, this passion, this enormous capacity for seduction that transcends the screen."

"He never asked and he never rejected anything," said the Athens newspaper Ta Nea. "He had it all."

In London, the Times recalled that "Mastroianni brought to many of his roles, even in the lightest romantic comedies, a soulful languor, a sadness behind the eyes that women invariably found irresistible."

France's main TV stations all led the Thursday evening news programmes with Mastroianni's death and several rescheduled the evening to show some of his films.

The front page of the daily Liberation consisting of a single picture of a young Mastroianni in a typical pose, hands outwards, with the single word "Marcello".

France-Soir fronted a still of the Trevi Fountain scene with Ekberg and the headline: "C'est Marcello le magnifique."

"Farewell Marcello, you made our life sweeter," said Milan's Corriere Della Sera. Pop singer turned actress Madonna Friday dedicated the Italian premiere of the film musical *Evita* to Mastroianni.

"I would also like to dedicate this screening to Marcello Mastroianni, a beautiful man, a great artist and one of the greatest gifts Italy has ever given the world," Madonna told viewers before the premiere in Rome.

Spanish actor Antonio Banderas, who plays Argentine revolutionary Che Guevara in the film, also dedicated the premiere to the Italian actor.

Madonna arrived in Rome Friday for the Italian premiere of *Evita*, which was released last Saturday in Los Angeles and is already spawning talk of Oscars.

Madonna plays Argentina's late Eva Peron in the film, a screen version of the Andrew Lloyd Webber musical.

Yeltsin vows vigorous return to Kremlin

MOSCOW (R) — President Boris Yeltsin, saying Russia needed an active president, new ideas and courage, promised Friday an energetic return to work in the Kremlin.

"I feel that the recovery period is over. I am returning to the Kremlin Monday, (Dec.) 23. I will be there at nine a.m.," the 65-year-old leader said in his first television interview since multiple bypass heart surgery last month.

"The doctors have done their job and now it is up to the president," he said. "The country needs an active and energetic president, especially now."

Mr. Yeltsin, who looked much thinner than before his surgery, spoke in a firm and decisive voice throughout the interview though he appeared to be moving stiffly.

The president also warned he will crack the whip on government officials who have not worked hard enough in his absence, and said managers of business who do not pay taxes should lose their jobs.

"Some officials slacked off in the euphoria after the election and during my absence. They should not expect it to be allowed to continue," he said. "We will hold everyone to account, whatever their previous achievements."

"The only criterion here is — the quality of life of the people," he continued. "We will part with those who are unable to turn towards the

people. We need new impulses, we need more courage and energy."

The remarks, recorded by the Kremlin Press Service, were filmed at the Rus residence outside Moscow where Mr. Yeltsin has spent the last stage of his post-operation recovery.

Dressed in a cardigan and open-neck shirt and sitting in a plush green armchair, the president appeared anxious to tackle the many problems that have mounted during his illness.

"There is no time for a warm-up. And besides, it is against my character. When I work, I work in earnest," he said.

The impulse to take quick, decisive action may be more than Mr. Yeltsin's doctors have recommended.

"The doctors recommend for a certain time a light regime — a staged, gentle resumption of work in order not to overload the president," Mr. Yeltsin's Press Secretary Sergei Yastrzhembsky told a news briefing earlier Friday.

Mr. Yeltsin said the main problems he would have to address were workers' unpaid wages, the peace process in the breakaway region of Chechnya and reform of the army and military doctrine.

"A state that cannot pay its workers for labour they have performed — this simply cannot be allowed," he said. "I think the situation here is intolerable."

Non-payment of taxes by major enterprises was

another problem Mr. Yeltsin said he would address by chairing a special commission to scrutinise the largest violators.

"I would like to remind managers of enterprises — if you are unable to pay (taxes) that means you are unfit for the job. And if you are unfit, you have to go," he said.

Mr. Yeltsin's government, battling a prolonged economic downturn, serious wage arrears as well as poor tax collection, received a boost Friday when the State Duma, the lower house of parliament, backed the 1997 budget on its second reading.

The Duma, though dominated by Mr. Yeltsin's Communist and nationalist opponents, approved the draft by 248 votes to 114.

The spending plans now have only to clear a third and final reading in the Duma before passing on to the more cooperative upper house Federation Council.

After suffering two heart attacks last year, Mr. Yeltsin waged a vigorous campaign for reelection in the first half of 1996.

He then disappeared from public view shortly before winning a second term on July 3, and in September announced that he would undergo major heart surgery.

After the Nov. 5 operation, Mr. Yeltsin has made only brief public remarks and kept a limited work schedule.

China bridge collapse claims 24 lives

BEIJING (R) — A bridge under construction in southern China has collapsed, burying dozens of workers under tonnes of debris and killing at least 24 people, officials said Saturday.

A 100-metre section of the almost-finished 160-metre bridge spanning a valley between Pingshi and Ruyuan counties in northern Guangdong province gave way Friday morning, an official of the local television station said by telephone.

Rescue workers, backed by police, had searched through the night for survivors under the debris, said an official from the Health Bureau in the nearby city of Shaoguan who had visited the scene.

"More than 90 people were working at the con-

struction site when the bridge collapsed, and many of them were injured," he said.

At least 24 people had been killed and 63 injured, said another local official who declined to be identified.

The task of digging through the rubble had been virtually completed at the scene near Ruyuan, an area populated by the Yao ethnic minority, about 150 kilometres north of the provincial capital Guangzhou, officials said.

A local resident living near the bridge estimated the casualties at about 100 people killed or injured, most of them migrant workers from Henan and Hebei provinces in central and north China who were building the bridge.

The health official said most of the injured had cuts or broken bones, and the most seriously hurt had been removed to hospitals in Shaoguan for treatment.

Health authorities had sent 11 ambulances and several dozen doctors and nurses to the scene, he said.

An official at the Yuebei People's Hospital in Shaoguan said doctors were treating five injured workers, and all were in stable condition.

Another eight had been admitted to the Shaoguan Number One People's Hospital where one had died and the rest were expected to survive, officials said.

Officials said the cause of the collapse was being investigated.

Burma government in contact with Suu Kyi

BANGKOK (R) — An emissary of the Burmese military government has been in contact with opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, but both sides denied Saturday that this was the start of a dialogue between them.

The emissary told Reuters from Rangoon that "a channel of information flow" had been opened between the ruling State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) and the leader of the National League for Democracy (NLD) party.

However, he added: "It is premature to call it the start of a dialogue. In this way it is direct and we don't have to rely on hearsay."

Deputy secretary-general of the NLD, U Tin Oo, confirmed that a government official had visited Mr. Suu Kyi this week, but said the meeting was to clarify the government request to her not to leave home without permission.

"There is a linkage between the SLORC and Aung San Suu Kyi. A liaison officer came to explain to her about her confinement to the house," he said. "It is not opening of a channel for dialogue."

Ms. Suu Kyi, who was released after six years of house arrest in July 1995, has sought dialogue with the SLORC to bring about more freedom and democracy in Burma.

But the SLORC has refused to hold a dialogue with Mr. Suu Kyi and her NLD. It had demanded that talks be held through the government-appointed National Convention which is drawing up a new national constitution.

Ms. Suu Kyi and her NLD walked out of the convention in November 1995.

Political sources in Rangoon said they had heard rumours that the SLORC and NLD had held talks through a mediator recently. Some believed that the opening of a channel between the two sides could be the harbinger of real dialogue but others doubted it was substantive.

Ms. Suu Kyi was told by the SLORC to remain indoors earlier this month after anti-government student demonstrations in the streets of Rangoon. She protested against the curb and critics called it another form of house arrest.

Sagan introduced millions to wonders of astronomy

SEATTLE (R) — Astronomer and Pulitzer Prize-winning author Carl Sagan, who used books and television to convey the mystery and wonders of the universe to ordinary people around the world, died Friday at age 62.

Sagan died from pneumonia after a two-year battle with a rare blood disorder that led to cancer, said Susan Edmonds, spokeswoman for the Fred Hutchinson Cancer Research Centre.

"As much as any scientific figure of our time, Carl described for an entire generation — the generation of the space age — the true wonders of the universe around us," said Dan Goldin, administrator of the space agency NASA.

Sagan was author of more than 20 books, including *Dragons of Eden*, an exploration of human intelligence that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1978, and hundreds of scientific and popular articles. But he was best known for *Cosmos*, his award-winning 1980 television series and companion book on the workings of the universe.

The 13-part series became the most popular in the history of public television and ultimately was viewed by some 500 million people.

"Through his writings and television productions, he brought the excitement and challenges of scientific discovery into the homes of millions of families here and abroad," said Hunter Rawlings, president of Cornell University, where Sagan was a professor for nearly 30 years. "We will



Carl Sagan

sorely miss him."

"Carl Sagan, more than any contemporary scientist I can think of, knew what it takes to stir passion within the public when it comes to the wonder and importance of science," said Bruce Alberts, president of the National Academy of Sciences, which bestowed on Sagan its highest honour in 1994.

Sagan passionately believed that life is abundant throughout the universe and spent much of his career trying to prove it, aiming radar telescopes at distant galaxies and listening for radio signals from far-off civilisations.

"I'd rather there be extraterrestrial life discovered in my lifetime than not," he told the Washington Post recently. "I'd hate to die and never know."

Early in his career he was so convinced of the possibility of life on other planets that he argued the Viking Mars space probe should have edible paint and a flashlight to attract Martians.

Sagan was born in the New York borough of

Brooklyn Nov. 9, 1934, the son of a Ukrainian immigrant garment worker and Austro-Hungarian mother.

He discovered astronomy early in life through the New York Public Library and by 26 he had a Doctor of Philosophy Degree in astrophysics from the University of Chicago.

He made his mark early with research into the atmospheres of Venus and Mars and began a long association with NASA. It included a leading role in the Mariner, Viking, Voyager and Galileo expeditions.

Sagan and a Cornell colleague were responsible for the famous plaques installed on the explorer ships Pioneer 10 and 11 as calling cards to other civilisations that included a depiction of Earth's location in the Milky Way galaxy and illustrations of a nude man and woman.

In the early 1970s he made the first of his many appearances on *The Tonight Show* with Johnny Carson that introduced millions to the wonders of astronomy and theories about the origin of life.

Sagan has been called "an intellectual gadfly" and was sometimes belittled by fellow-scientists who said his work was too much style and not enough substance.

But Sagan never apologised for his popular work. "Here's science dependent as never before on public funds, and so continuing science depends on public support," he once said. "And how's the public going to support it if they don't understand it?"

IRA admits Belfast shooting

BELFAST (Agencies) — The IRA claimed responsibility Saturday for shooting a policeman guarding Nigel Dodds, a prominent pro-British politician in Northern Ireland.

But the guerrilla group, in a message to a Belfast radio station, said Mr. Dodds was not their target.

The incident Friday evening came hours after police warned the public to be on the alert for possible attacks by Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas.

One of two policemen who were guarding Mr. Dodds, a close aide of Protestant leader Ian Paisley, was shot in the foot when two men wearing dark wigs opened fire at a children's hospital in West Belfast, a Republican stronghold.

Rev. Paisley told Reuters that Mr. Dodds, a former mayor of Belfast, and his wife were by the bedside of their infant son, who is seriously ill, when they heard three shots in the corridor outside.

He said the police guards had recognised one of the men wearing wigs as a well-known member of the IRA.

"The IRA men opened up with their guns and fortunately missed. The bullet grazed the foot of one police officer," Rev. Paisley, leader of the Democratic Unionist Party, said.

"I don't know how low these people can stoop. It proves conclusively what I have been saying for a very long time — you can't negotiate with such people. They are beyond the pale," he added.

The shooting is potentially a serious blow to Northern Ireland's badly battered peace process.

Protestant politicians who want Northern Ireland to remain British said they had been warned recently by security sources about a growing risk of assassination attempts.

Earlier Friday the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) warned the public "to be particularly vigilant in light of the recent increase in terrorist activity."

The IRA killed a soldier in an attack on Britain's military headquarters at Lisburn near Belfast in October, and a splinter group, the Irish Continuity Army Council, made an unsuccessful bid in November to set off a car bomb outside a police base in Londonderry, the province's second city.

Both groups are fighting to end rule by Britain. The province's 60 per cent Protestant majority strongly support links with London and reject the Republicans' aim to achieve an all-Ireland state ruled from Dublin.

The IRA abandoned a 17-month ceasefire in February, setting off the first of a string of bombs on mainland Britain.

In recent weeks in Northern Ireland, police have uncovered quantities of explosives and bomb-making items and said that guerrillas tried to lure them into a mortar-bomb attack in Belfast.

The IRA has refused appeals by Britain, Ireland and the United States to call a new ceasefire to win a seat at peace talks for its political arm, Sinn Fein.

A unionist leader in Northern Ireland said Saturday he was pessimistic a loyalist truce would be maintained following the attack by the IRA.

"I believe that fundamentally the intention of the attack within the sanctity of a hospital for a man visiting his critically ill child is to draw the loyalists back to war," David Ervine, leader of the small Progressive Unionist Party, told BBC Radio.

Loyalist paramilitaries declared a ceasefire in August 1994, shortly after the IRA announced a truce.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
Established 1975
جريدة عربية سياسية مستقلة تصدر بالانجليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

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Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephones: 684311, 699634
Telex: 21497 ALRAI JO
Facsimile: 696183

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays.
Subscription and advertising rates are available from the
Jordan Times advertising department.

Commendable effort

PALESTINIAN PRESIDENT Yasser Arafat's talks with His Majesty King Hussein on Saturday came at a very critical juncture in the Palestinian-Israeli peace talks. With the issue of Israeli redeployment in Hebron still dragging on and with Israel determined on expanding its settlements in the occupied Arab lands, the negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians have effectively reached an impasse. Jordan has repeatedly warned Israel about the dire consequences of the continuing deadlock in the peace process and made several determined efforts to convince the Israeli government of the danger inherent in its settlement policy. Thursday's visit of Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to Amman for talks with the Jordanian leaders took place against the backdrop of Jordanian indignation at the rapid deterioration on the peace effort as a result of the slow pace of progress on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks with Israel.

Mr. Arafat has just ended a European tour that included a meeting with Pope John Paul II in Rome and a stopover in Cairo to brief Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. King Hussein's meeting with President Arafat and Jordan's renewed commitment of support for the Palestinian people must therefore be seen as part of the Kingdom's effort to push for an irreversible and comprehensive peace. Jordan has faithfully lent all possible support to the Palestinian people in their efforts to establish their own state on Palestinian soil and sees a direct link between progress on the Palestine front with developments in the Jordanian-Israeli relations. There is no Arab country whose security and stability is more affected by lingering Palestinian question than Jordan.

As much as the redeployment issue in Hebron could be a watershed for more progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks, the Palestinian side has every reason to link the negotiation on Hebron with the other outstanding issues dividing the two parties. There is a genuine fear that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu would, once a deal on Hebron is concluded, drag his feet on further redeployment in the West Bank and on the start of final status negotiations.

On the other hand, the remark made by the prime minister's top policy adviser, David Bar-Illan, on Friday that the Likud-led government would accept the creation of a "limited" Palestinian state offers a glimmer of hope for peace-seekers. The establishment of an independent Palestinian state alongside Israel is the very formula that will lead to a lasting settlement in the region.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

A WRITER for Al Ra'i Saturday cited figures published by the Palestinian Information Ministry indicating that most of the lands of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip have been seized by the Israeli authorities to the extent that the Palestinians cannot find land on which to set up their future state. Tayseer Zibri said that since the Oslo accord, which was signed in 1993, and until September 1996, the Israelis have swallowed up 300,000 dunums, to add to the 3 million dunums which had already been confiscated in the Palestinian lands. This is equivalent to 74 per cent of the West Bank and 40 per cent of the Gaza Strip, added the writer, who noted that the confiscated land has been either used to build settlements or to open ring roads which, it is claimed, can give security to the settlers. He said that as the settlements fever continues, the Israeli authorities announced that they have earmarked \$40 million to purchase land and houses for the settlers in the Hebron and Jerusalem areas only. Should this trend continue, he said, the Palestinians would not be able in any way to set up their independent state simply because there will not be any land left for that project.

BY FAILING to honour its commitments towards the Palestinians, as provided for in the Oslo accords, and by failing to honour its pledges concerning water supplies, as stated in the Jordan-Israeli peace treaty, the present Israeli government has proved it is against peace, said Mohammad Kawash who writes for Al Dustour. Furthermore, Israel is holding on to the lands it has occupied in south Lebanon and the Golan Heights, showing an intransigent stand and declaring its intention to build more settlements there, he said. One of the main reasons prompting Israel to delay or even totally disregard any peace agreements with the Arabs is its needs of water resources, which are found in the Arab lands the Jewish state has been occupying for the past decades, said the writer. After depleting the aquifers of the West Bank, Israel is now drawing the water found in south Lebanon and the Golan, and it seems determined never to give up the Arab territory which supplies the Israelis with water, continued the writer. Indeed, Israel might go to war in order to secure water resources for its growing domestic, agricultural and industrial needs, said the writer, who warned the Arab countries in the region to be ready for any eventuality.

Sunday's Economic Pulse

Services, which generate 75 per cent of the jobs, should be supported

IT IS not true that the future of the Jordanian economy depends heavily on what happens in the industrial sector or, for that matter, in the commodity-production sectors in general. Manufacturing and extracting industries employ no more than 91,000 workers (1993), or 10.6 per cent of the labour force in the country, including non-Jordanian guest workers. The commodity-production sectors combined, sometimes erroneously called the production sector, including all forms of manufacturing, mining, agriculture, electricity, water and construction, do not employ more than 212,000 workers, or less than 25 per cent of the job opportunities available in the country.

I am not trying to underestimate the importance of commodity production. It is definitely vital and should be promoted, but one should realise that all our five-year economic development plans focused on this sector and allocated the lion's share of available resources for investment in this area, only to discover, after 25 years of bias, that no positive results were achieved and the ratio of commodity sector to the economy failed to exceed one third of the gross domestic product (GDP). This sector has a strong appetite to absorb huge amounts of capital without gener-

ating the expected return relative to the capital invested. Suffice it to point out that trade, restaurants and hotels employ 130,000 workers, or 142 per cent of the employment in the entire mining and manufacturing sector. Various services sectors, including transportation, storing, communication, banking, insurance, trade, real estate, social and personal services and public administration are responsible for 75 per cent of the jobs in the country. Services produce 66 per cent of the GDP, which indicates that services tend to produce 15 per cent more jobs per unit of GDP and perhaps 10 times more jobs per unit of capital.

To put it differently, we can say that services are labour intensive while industry is capital intensive. Jordan has plenty of manpower but lacks the capital which should determine our priorities.

On the other hand, the industry is highly protected, at the expense of the consumers. In order to make it profitable, while services do not enjoy a demand similar protection. Services operate on their own, without direct or implied subsidy.

In view of the guidelines of the International Monetary

Fund's (IMF) economic adjustment programme, the requirements of the European partnership and the conditions of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), Jordan will drastically reduce customs protection over the coming 10 years, putting industry under pressure. Therefore, the superiority of services over commodities will become tougher in the industrial sector while it will be relatively gentle in most services sectors, especially tourism, medical services, computer programming, transportation, etc.

We should not forget that the prospects of the agricultural sector are limited, due to lack of water which is a limiting factor.

Jordan enjoys a comparative competitive advantage in the production of services, first because of the quality of its human element, which is the major productive factor, second because of its central location in the Middle East, with open bridges to the outside world and the global market, and third because services need much less capital, which is the limiting factor, than industry.

It pays to realise this simple fact and plan our economic policies accordingly.

Peru — déjà vu, all over again

By Gwynne Dyer

FOUR PREDICTIONS about the hostage-taking at the Japanese embassy in Lima:

1) The Tupac Amaru guerrillas will not kill anybody. After the first 48 hours, hostage-takers rarely do.

2) Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori will not negotiate with the guerrillas. His whole reputation is founded on never yielding to their threats, never even talking to them.

3) The embassy will not be stormed. That would need the permission of the Japanese government, and Japan will not allow it.

4) The world's media will wring every ounce of drama out of the affair, in conscious symbiosis with the guerrillas. But after a while, they will realise that the world is not watching any more.

A large number of the captives in the Japanese embassy will probably be released in the next few days, simply to ease the burden on a mere dozen guerrillas of guarding and

feeding hundreds of people. But they will hold onto enough high-profile hostages to keep the "crisis" going, and its end is likely to be weeks or even months away.

When the end comes, however, it will probably come in almost complete obscurity. People will hear the news that the last hostages have been released and be surprised that they had not been freed long ago. After all, the whole affair had not been mentioned in the media for weeks.

"Been there, seen that." Living in Peru, the Tupac Amaru guerrillas are caught in a kind of time warp, and could not be expected to understand that this sort of thing no longer makes good television in the rest of the world. Besides, with their movement in terminal decline, what other options did they have? But the truth is that the novelty of mass hostage taking has worn off.

In the 1970s, viewers could be persuaded to watch for days as the zoom lens focused shakily on hijacked airliners parked on a desert airstrip or on shadowy figures moving behind the windows of some besieged building. It was new, it was shocking, it caught people's imagination. Which was, of course, precisely what the terrorists counted on.

That was then, but this is now. Is there anybody who thinks that the hostage taking at the Japanese embassy in Peru is a new phenomenon? Is anybody shocked? Of course not. So after a few days, while the media strive mightily to pull out into the story emotionally, the story will fade from the international media — which is precisely what President Fujimori's people are counting on.

Anti-terrorist teams from all over the place are arriving in Lima on every inbound flight, balaclavas neatly packed in their carry-on luggage, but these specialised (and seriously underemployed) soldiers and policemen from practically every country with citizens among the hostages will not get any exercise in Peru.

Left to his own devices, Fujimori might well author-

ise an assault on the embassy compound after a few weeks had passed and the world's attention had drifted away, but Tokyo will not allow it. Somehow, the country that nurtured kamikazes fifty years ago has become the most timid of all the major powers, preferring always to buy its way out of trouble rather than fight its way out. We should probably be grateful for that, but it is a puzzle.

At any rate, the Japanese involvement precludes a violent end to the incident, with all the Action Men crashing in on the baddies just like in the commercials on kids' TV. Just as well, probably, since if that sort of thing goes wrong, a lot of people can get killed, and there are few other ways that this affair could produce many deaths.

On the other hand, no amount of pressure on President Fujimori to compromise with the guerrillas, from people whose countries have not been ruined by 15 years of rampant terrorism, is going to make him abandon the tough policies that have restored some

kind of order to Peru (and put the leaders of both major guerrilla movements behind bars) since he came to power. He will not free duly convicted terrorists from prison, he will not change his government's economic policies, he will not pay them ransom.

So in the end, some formula will have to be found to let the guerrillas leave — but leave without any of their demands being met. Just a plane to Cuba (which will need some arm-twisting before it lets them in), in return for the release of all the hostages.

By then, our attention will long since have drifted elsewhere — which is precisely what should happen. To pay attention to this sort of thing is just to encourage it. But is there anything anybody could have done to prevent it from happening in the first place? Probably not.

If you have a small group of people who are well armed, well trained and ideologically controlled, you can pull off a major attack like taking over Congress or killing a general or hijacking an air-

plane," said Enrique Obando, a leading expert on Peru's guerrillas. Obvious enough now — but he said it exactly a year ago, after an earlier plot by the same Tupac Amaru outfit to seize Peru's Congress and hold the politicians hostage was thwarted by Peruvian police.

After a shoot-out in an affluent neighbourhood not far from the Japanese embassy, the police captured weapons, documents and uniforms assembled as part of a Tupac Amaru plan to attack Congress. "These types of attacks and kidnappings in exchange for their comrades in prison are easy enough to pull off," said Obando. "We were lucky this time that the police struck first."

So Tupac Amaru recycled the plan and a year later put it into action at the Japanese ambassador's party. Déjà vu, all over again. It will not get them anywhere (except Cuba), it will not even do the networks any good. This is an outrage that has passed its sell-by date.

AS PEOPLE with German passports, we are confused by the selling of a new translation of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in many bookshops in Amman. Until now, we tried without success to defend ourselves against the daily attempts of Arabs to glorify the industrial killing of millions of people as a shining era in German history.

More than once we heard that we are brothers because we are fighting the same enemy. We are shocked by the ignorant glorification and conscious historic falsification of an era that, in our eyes, marks the low point in the evolution of humanity.

We get angry when reading in the preface of this translation that Hitler built something for eternity, something man can be proud of.

He was an anti-Semite: anti-Semite! If German troops would have ever reached Palestine, the mufli of Jerusalem would have deeply regretted his contacts with nationalist Germany, as did Stalin's USSR after the devastating German invasion of western Russia. Hitler and his Germans were brutal criminals, cold-blooded murderers and blindly following fascists.

Sure, you might say that we are manipulated by "Zionist media," that not only Jews, but also communists and socialists died in the camps. Germans are especially sensible to the historic discussion of the Third Reich. We want to make our reaction clear: the picture that every German is manipulated by Jewish media, so that we have a wrong impression about the holocaust, is as wrong as the picture of the throat-cutting and bomb throwing Muslims fighting the West.

After the war, members of our families were forced to help evacuate the camps where thousands died in the centre of Germany, making it possible for us to imagine the even worse situation in the concentration camps in Eastern Europe. Everyone who has visited the sites of these industrial killing camps would do anything but mention the name Hitler in connection to something positive for the human future.

It is difficult for us to ignore today people who still call their children Hitler, or a waiter in a restaurant who, after asking us where we are from, greets us with a cheerful "Welcome Hitler." It also hits deep to have a taxi driver commenting on our same enemy, the Jews, to just name a few incidents.

We like Jordan. We study the Arabic language because of its fascinating beauty. It is impossible to understand how, in the holy land, people still glorify most brutal crimes, incomparable in human history.

Göte Nordbunch and Theo Latzel, Amman.

The West has a Russia problem it is not facing

By Rodric Braithwaite

MOSCOW — Since Humpty-Dumpty fell off the Berlin Wall in 1989, and the easy certainties of the cold war were shattered, the West's attempts to put together a stable, non-confrontational Europe have been undermined by muddled thinking, misplaced realpolitik and half-baked sentimentality.

Western policymakers have stumbled forward like sleepwalkers, cannoning into obstacles that they knew were there but hoped to be able to ignore. Their first illusion was that East-West relations cold in future be based on a "partnership" in which Russia would play second fiddle, following where the West chose to lead.

Any idea that Russia, even in its present probably temporary state of weakness, will allow its interests to be denied by others is absurd. A partnership which does not provide for the mutual adjustment of conflicting interests between equals is bound to fail.

The second illusion was that the Western institutions which served so well during the cold war could be adapted with comparatively little difficulty to embrace wholly new tasks and wholly new members.

The European Union would bring in the countries of Eastern Europe, and accord them the common benefits of economic prosperity and political stability. NATO, too, would expand to support the new democracies, keep the peace among them when necessary, and (but this was only whispered) guarantee them protection should the Russian bear ever resume its wicked ways.

Enlargement of the European Union would mean massive changes in its decision-making institutions and its agricultural and regional policies. These changes are opposed by strong political lobbies in the present member states.

And NATO members show little practical enthusiasm for proposed "new tasks" — quelling ethnic strife in Europe and policing the periphery. Americans are not the only people who see little reason to send their sons to die in distant lands, even for the most admirable causes. And Western legislators may well reject the costs and the risks of guaranteeing the security of new members when they address the issues, which they have yet to do.

Even so, NATO will probably expand a bit: the political humiliation would otherwise be too hard to bear. The European Union may try to follow suit. But neither institution can afford to embrace all those who wish to join. So we shall create new dividing lines in Europe, despite these soothing words of those who argue otherwise.

And where does that leave Russia? It is not going to be a member of either NATO or the European Union. It is too big for the union, and cannot join NATO unless that alliance — formed to keep Russia to the east of the Elbe — is transformed beyond all recognition.

Yet if anything is clear, it is this: Any European arrangement which is opposed by Russia, which Russia feels is against its vital national interests, which leaves Russia as a revanchist power

on Europe's eastern flank, will in the long-run be as shaky as the 1919 so-called settlement at Versailles.

The West must devise a way of bringing Russia as a satisfied status quo power into the new Europe. Russia should not dictate the terms, any more than France and Germany, respectively, dictated their terms of the European settlements after 1815 and 1945. But those settlements did succeed in bringing France and Germany into the comity of European nations, despite the suspicions left by decades of conflict.

It is true that many Russian politicians (but few ordinary Russians, who have more pressing practical problems) reject a status quo marking the end of the empire they took more than a thousand years to build. Russia's neighbours are fearful. Given their history, they have good reason.

But despite all the doubts, the West needs to take its courage in its hands and do for the Russians what it once did for the French and the Germans.

Even in disarray, Russia is the largest of the European powers. If we do not now give it some voice in the ordering of European affairs, it will one day be tempted to take it.

NATO has made a timid step in the right direction by offering the Russians an ill-defined "charter" with standing arrangements for consultation and joint action. The Russians have proposed equally vague measures to strengthen the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) — an inadequate body, but the only international security

organisation to which they now belong, and the only one that has even a faint chance of becoming the all-European institution we need.

The OSCE heads of state and government were meeting in Lisbon last week. NATO foreign ministers are to meet in Brussels soon. Leaders thus have another opportunity to debate the issues with their eyes open. They will find no neat or early answers.

We shall certainly not end up with a Europe elegantly held together by the two great postwar institutions of the West. But if we are lucky, patient and serious, we may in time end up with a tangle of political and economic bodies — for Baltic security, Balkan peace, regional economic cooperation, and so on — criss-crossing one another like the spaghetti junction on a motorway.

The spaghetti will be tasteless unless a real effort is made to put some pan-European beef into it — a "charter" with teeth, a European Security Council in the OSCE, or some combination of measures deliberately designed to give Russia its due place.

The new Humpty-Dumpty will be patched and cracked in places, but he will be a lot more attractive than the renewed confrontation with Russia that is the likely alternative.

The writer is a former British ambassador to the USSR and then Russia, and co-author of a recent report to the Trilateral Commission on "Engaging Russia". This article is reprinted from the International Herald Tribune.

LETTERS

Unacceptable glorification

To the Editor:

AS PEOPLE with German passports, we are confused by the selling of a new translation of Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" in many bookshops in Amman. Until now, we tried without success to defend ourselves against the daily attempts of Arabs to glorify the industrial killing of millions of people as a shining era in German history.

More than once we heard that we are brothers because we are fighting the same enemy. We are shocked by the ignorant glorification and conscious historic falsification of an era that, in our eyes, marks the low point in the evolution of humanity.

We get angry when reading in the preface of this translation that Hitler built something for eternity, something man can be proud of.

He was an anti-Semite: anti-Semite! If German troops would have ever reached Palestine, the mufli of Jerusalem would have deeply regretted his contacts with nationalist Germany, as did Stalin's USSR after the devastating German invasion of western Russia. Hitler and his Germans were brutal criminals, cold-blooded murderers and blindly following fascists.

Sure, you might say that we are manipulated by "Zionist media," that not only Jews, but also communists and socialists died in the camps. Germans are especially sensible to the historic discussion of the Third Reich. We want to make our reaction clear: the picture that every German is manipulated by Jewish media, so that we have a wrong impression about the holocaust, is as wrong as the picture of the throat-cutting and bomb throwing Muslims fighting the West.

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Ross mission aims at convincing Arafat

(Continued from page 1)

Washington.

Administration officials and diplomats suggest that there was more to the American criticism than attempting to strike a diplomatic balance.

According to the source, the administration is frustrated by Mr. Arafat's reluctance to sign the Hebron agreement which they view as crucial to the breaking of the stalemate in the peace process. According to Palestinian officials, Mr. Arafat will not sign until there is a clear written Israeli commitment to complete the implementation of the Oslo accords and start the final status negotiations.

The American administration, however, seems to reject Mr. Arafat's logic. According

to the American sources, Israel has accepted the linkage between the Hebron agreement and other steps including a redeployment of Israeli troops from areas B and C in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip and to start the final status talks. "It is not true that the Hebron agreement is confined to Hebron. There are many issues involved in the agreement that relate to further Israeli redeployment and the final status talks," said an American source.

Palestinian officials disagreed. They said Israel had given nothing concrete and there were no guarantees. "There is nothing concrete," a Gaza-based official contacted by phone said.

Based on contacts with the American and Palestinian

sides, there seems to be a serious gap in the assessment of the situation. The Palestinians argue that the Israeli government's settlement policy indicates a lack of commitment to the Oslo accords and determination to maintain control of most of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The American administration does not see the Israeli policy as the main problem hindering the peace process. Administration officials view the settlement as an obstacle. They believe that the main problem is lack of trust. "Settlement activities were going on under the previous (Labour government) but the process continued. The difference is that the Israelis' settlement activities are taking place in a vacuum and consequently they

have more impact on the Palestinian political reaction," said one American official.

According to this logic, building mutual Palestinian-Israeli trust through the continuity of the peace process will create the necessary atmosphere to negotiate the sticking points such as the settlements.

Thus Mr. Ross is expected to try to convince Mr. Arafat that the only way to move the process forward and consequently raise the settlements at the negotiating table is to break the stalemate over Hebron. Such an American approach will confront with the Palestinian leadership with tough choices, especially that there are no indications that the U.S. will take any steps to force Israel to stop expanding settlements.

Iraq says it is victim of U.S-Israeli conspiracy

(Continued from page 1)

Iraq.

"They ended up with no positive results which made them hurry in taking their agents out of Iraq before they fall in the hands of the faithful Iraqis," it said.

This was a reference to the recent evacuation by the United States of several thousand Kurds and other minorities from Iraq for possible asylum in America to protect them from reprisals by Iraqi security forces.

The evacuation took place after Iraqi security agents entered the Kurdish area in late August when the Iraqi army intervened in support of a Kurdish faction fighting another for control. Among those taken out were workers for international aid agencies.

Air force officer Saad Daham Awad, the first of the alleged spies to speak on state television Friday night, said he got involved with the Kurds in the northern town of Erbil during drug deals. He said his Kurdish drug partners later asked him for information about military

security offices.

"They took the information to the Iraq Trust," Awad, 32, said, adding that it purported to be a relief organization but in fact was a CIA front. The trust, he said, then gave the material to a woman he identified only by the name Susan, who he said worked for the CIA out of the Turkish air base at Incirlik.

His brother, 26-year-old navy officer Salahuddin Daham Awad, said the Kurds blackmailed him into cooperating by threatening to make public a tape they had made of him. He did not say exactly what was on the tape.

It was not immediately clear whether the four men who appeared on television had been officially charged with spying for a foreign country, a crime punishable by death in Iraq.

Iraq's media charged last month that Iraqi Kurds working for international charities in northern Iraq were really CIA agents, and Western media reports also have said the CIA had agents in northern Iraq working with Iraqi opposition groups.

Iraqi television accused

Washington on Friday of using humanitarian operations as a cover for its intelligence operations.

It also called on Iraqis to "remain vigilant and prudent against those who would try to obtain military and civilian information or information of officials."

At Iraq said the government expected further assassination attempts "because those defeated will not hesitate to commit the most odious crimes in revenge." Uday was injured in a shooting ambush in Baghdad on Dec. 12.

One of the accused spies said he had first smuggled medicines from Baghdad to Erbil and then to Iran, "before bringing Iranian medicines past their self-bait date into Iraq to sell to sick Iraqis at exorbitant prices."

"Then I prepared reports on Iraqi military institutions" for the CIA, with the help of his brother Salahuddin, a former officer of the Iraqi naval college, Mr. Saad said.

The three others who also confessed to belonging to the network said it was operated from Kurdistan in northern

Iraq using "Iraq trust."

A U.S. official said any Iraqis put on display as alleged CIA agents could include some people detained by Iraqi troops in early September after Iraqi forces drove into the western-protected Kurdish safe haven in northern Iraq.

Iraqi dissident groups in Europe have said that when the Iraqi troops entered the north, they broke up a long-standing CIA-funded covert operation to destabilise the Iraqi president.

Last March Baghdad said the United States had recruited agents who planted car bombs in the capital Baghdad, Tikrit and other Iraqi cities.

In the same month Iraq also accused Gulf war foe Kuwait of recruiting agents who carried out sabotage attacks against the Iraqi people. U.N. observers and arms inspectors.

Iraq's state-run television then interviewed six Iraqis from Basra who said the Kuwaiti secret police had recruited them to plant bombs in various parts of the country.

Kabariti pledges all possible assistance

(Continued from page 1)

from the government, he said.

Through these societies members have been able to own homes and succeeded in creating consumer markets in towns and villages selling various commodities at reasonable prices, according to Mr. Tayeb.

In agriculture, the cooperative societies provided

farmers with equipment as well as seeds and guidance in the use of modern technology, said Mr. Tayeb.

He called on the government to take steps to help resolve problems facing the cooperative sector and create a special bank to offer loans to cooperative societies and also issue a draft law that would address many loopholes in the present legislation.

He also demanded that

the government take into consideration the cooperatives' needs whenever it decides on its policies in a manner that would help cooperatives' societies pursue the role of development in all fields.

Minister of state in charge of the JCO, Mifteh Ruheimi, underlined the importance of the role of cooperatives in socio-economic development. He said that the government seeks to

remove barriers in the path of cooperative enabling them to contribute to sustainable development.

Participants meeting at the Royal Cultural Centre will review topics including five working papers covering the role of cooperatives in development, in housing projects and also the restructuring the work of the present cooperative societies with a view to boosting their activities.

Rebels free a few hostages

(Continued from page 1)

Cartolini while being held in the residence.

But the MRTA's immediate goal is the freedom of their comrades.

In their statement Friday the rebels said that if they were allowed to speak by telephone with some of their jailed comrades, "we will proceed by releasing a significant number of people not related to the government."

The hostages, meanwhile, called on the government to "discard any military solution that would cause many deaths," said lawmaker Javier Diez Canseco, reading from a statement upon his release with the other 37 hostages.

But negotiations to end the hostage crisis remained stalled.

"There doesn't seem to be any concrete progress in the negotiations. They are not paralysed, but they are taking a while," International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) spokesman Steve Anderson said Friday.

He also warned that the situation inside the embassy residence was deteriorating. "Problems are growing by the minute for the hostages inside," he said.

Red Cross officials at the residence early Saturday said electricity would be restored shortly to the compound, after hostages demanded in their statement that water, telephone and electric power be reinstated.

"The water has been cut at

dawn (Friday). The electricity has been cut from outside and we have a generator working temporarily until the fuel runs out," the hostages said Friday. "We demand that these services be restored."

The ICRC has been delivering bottled water, food and other supplies to the compound since the beginning of the crisis.

The Japanese government said Saturday it will send an eight-member team — comprised of three doctors, four nurses and one government official — in a day or two to help the victims.

ICRC delegates from Argentina and Colombia have arrived in Lima to assist the Peruvian delegation, while the Japanese Red Cross said it would also send a team, including two doctors and three nurses, which was due to arrive in the Peruvian capital Monday.

No injuries or casualties have been reported so far in the standoff. The ambassadors from South Korea, Lee Won-Yueng, Brazil's Luis Coutinho Perez, and Egypt's Sami Tewfik were among the hostages released Friday.

One hostage, identified as Kihoyiko Tanaka, president of NEC Peru, was taken from the compound in a wheelchair.

The ambassadors of Austria, Bolivia, Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Honduras, Japan, Malaysia, Panama, Uruguay and Venezuela remained.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONALS PRIVATISATION AGENCY (PA) OF THE GOVERNMENT OF JORDAN

The Government of Jordan has embarked on an ambitious privatisation programme which covers sectors such as telecommunications, electricity, transport, tourism and industry. PA, agency responsible for the design and implementation of the Government's privatisation programme, is looking for leading professional to strengthen its Secretariat. Positions listed below will be offered to suitable candidates for a period not less than one year, at highly competitive private sector salaries, utilising funds available under a technical assistance programme with a multilateral donor agency.

MANAGING DIRECTOR

PA wishes to recruit a senior professional as its Managing Director (MD) to assist in managing its Secretariat. The person should possess:

- * Exceptional leadership qualities and experience (minimum 20 years), vision and managerial skills;
- * In-depth knowledge on organisational, financial legal and strategic issues related to enterprise restructuring and privatisation;
- * Knowledge of enterprise operations, management and finance; and
- * Outstanding communication abilities in written and oral English.

The main responsibilities of the MD will include to:

- * Assist PA in building up a policy and operational framework for the programme;
- * Advise on strategies and approaches to privatisation for different sectors;
- * Assist in the design of the general framework, policies and operational procedures;
- * Manage the operations of the Secretariat;
- * Coordinate all ongoing transactions and initiate the

- preparation work of the new ones;
- * Liaise between the Chairman and the staff of the Secretariat; and
- * Supervise the work of the staff.

TRANSACTION MANAGERS

PA is looking for five private sector professionals, as Transaction Managers, to be responsible for managing specific privatisation transactions. The candidates should possess:

- * A minimum of 5-year sector experience (in at least one of the sectors mentioned above);
- * A good general knowledge of enterprise operations, company law, accounting standards and financial analysis;
- * Ability to demonstrate a successful track record in project management;
- * Masters degree in management sciences, preferably with emphasis on corporate finance;
- * Computer literacy and experience in the use of word processing and spreadsheets; and
- * Outstanding communication abilities in written and oral English.

Privatisation experience is not a must but a significant advantage.

Transaction Managers will assume the following responsibilities:

- * Develop a work plan for specific transactions and determine the resource requirements;
- * Form an "Enterprise Team" with outside consultants and relevant PA staff for transaction;
- * With the help of the team, carry out the entire transaction, from preparation work to closing of the transaction;
- * Coordinate, guide and supervise the work of the "Enterprise Team";
- * Liaise between PA, advisors, management of the concerned enterprise, relevant ministry and regulatory agencies;
- * Assist PA in preparing terms of reference for sub-contractors and international/local experts and

- advise in the recruitment process; and
- * Provide assistance to PA in drawing up the strategy and approach for specific privatisations.

FINANCIAL ANALYST

PA requires the services of a Financial Analyst to assist the Secretariat in the privatisation transactions.

The person should possess:

- * A minimum of 5-year experience in finance, accounting and general management in recognised corporate establishments;
- * A good general knowledge of company law, accounting standards, financial modelling, valuation methods and forecasting techniques;
- * Masters degree in business administration, preferably with emphasis on corporate finance;
- * Computer literacy and experience in word processing and spreadsheets; and
- * Strong command of written and oral English.

Privatisation experience is not a must but a significant advantage.

The Financial Analyst will be expected to:

- * Carry out financial analysis, projections and valuation of enterprises selected for privatisation;
- * Advise on pre-privatisation financial restructuring, if necessary;
- * Determine the levels of investment requirements;
- * Assist in the preparation of bidding documents and information memorandum; and
- * Assist in the evaluation of financial proposal.

Interested candidates should send their recent CVs to the following address by January 15, 1997.

Minimum acceptable salary may be indicated in the applications.

{ADDRESS}

Amman — P.O.Box 80

Christie Whitman — most probable woman candidate for the White House

By Daphne Barak

THERE IS one thing that many people in America agree on: whether referring to a nearer or more remote date, the most probable woman candidate for the White House is Christie Whitman.

I met this tall woman with the girlish figure and hairdo in Israel.

Question: What are you actually looking for here in Israel?

Answer: I came as head of a delegation of 100 people. Businessmen in New Jersey do a lot of business in Israel. I am talking about the technological field and industry.

Q: In order to keep the sacred balance, since you are in the Middle East, what about business with the Arab countries?

A: Israel is in the 6th place, the Arab countries are not included in those first ten. But I'm checking on possibilities with the Palestinians. I was hoping to meet here with the Jordanian ambassador and obviously I am very interested in checking the business possibilities with the Gulf countries.

Q: Looking backwards afresh, you were really sharp when you said "No!" to Bob Dole (on the possibility of running with him for the White House).

A: I only declared that if he weighs taking me into consideration for the campaign — I'm not in the picture.

Q: That's because you were betting that he would lose?

A: No, there's no connection. I have been the governor of New Jersey for only three years. It still fascinates me. I enjoy every minute. That's all.

Q: When will there be a woman in the White House?

A: I estimate that in the next four to eight years. That is really an important point. The time has come.

Q: And that woman — will it be you?

A: At the moment I am



Christie Whitman

concentrating on my reelection as governor of New Jersey in 1997. I am not thinking past that.

Q: That is a diplomatic answer. You do not deny that possibility?

A: Yes, that was a diplomatic answer.

Q: The woman's vote has become an important factor in the Western world. Bill Clinton faced it. Tony Blair is trying to address British women. What are you doing about it?

A: That's right, the women's vote is really being talked about. The problem is that women do not automatically vote for other women. That is a very interesting viewpoint. We women are so used to men being the leaders, that it is very interesting to foresee how women will relate to a woman in government.

Q: And that woman — will it be you?

A: At the moment I am

I was asked if I had higher education. I naturally replied: "Yes". Later on, I found that only one of those men running against me actually had a higher education. People expect less from women, but they demand more. If I had replied negatively — that I had no higher education — it is very doubtful that I would be sitting here with you.

Q: When you were a little girl, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A: A surgeon. I used to specialise in worms. The idyll continued until I got to biology lessons and had to practice on frogs.

Q: And then, did you want to be a politician?

A: The truth is that I grew up in a political family. I always felt that the image of the politician is so negative. Look, when I was running for the governor's post, I was

advised: "Don't call yourself a politician." So I said: "But I am a politician!"

Q: Are you a good politician?

A: I believe so. I am a good governor. I have made many change in New Jersey. My predecessor raised taxes. People, businessmen were unhappy I cut taxes, I improved the business climate. I made a lot of changes in education I am making a difference.

Q: What is the biggest misconception about you?

A: Maybe that I am stiff and formal? But it is not correct. I am very informal. I am crazy about sports: horse-back riding, tennis, kayak riding.

Q: During this visit you almost made a serious political error: You planned on visiting the tunnel (in Jerusalem) whose opening caused the renewal of violence in the area.

A: Look, I wanted to see the tunnel privately, because it is an historical and archaeological site. It was meant to be a private visit.

Q: As someone who is being talked about as a candidate for the White House, and as governor of New Jersey, you are not exactly a private person.

A: I thought so. I talked of my intentions with someone, who told someone, who told someone, and that is how it got to the press and produced a lot of noise. I did not wish to cause any damage to an Israeli soldier or an Arab shopkeeper, or to just a tourist.

Q: And so you desisted on that idea?

A: Yes. But I hope to be able to visit there in the future without any political noise or violence. I really hope so.

OECD sees global growth as inflation risk ebbs

PARIS (R) — The bulk of OECD economies can bank on further recovery without a threat of inflation but the United States and Britain should watch for any hint of price rises, the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) says.

The Paris-based think tank, which now counts 29 member-countries, said in a twice-yearly economic outlook that growth should reach 2.4 per cent in 1996 and 1997 and was expected to pick up to 2.7 per cent in 1998.

The risk of inflation is low in Japan and continental Europe and will remain so for a year or two at least, but Europe will still be plagued by high unemployment for some time, it said.

"The major blot on this picture is the high unemployment that will persist in Europe, even if it should decline somewhat in the next couple of years," OECD chief economist Kumiharu Shigehara told a news conference.

The OECD forecasters suggest the lower inflation risk should be exploited, allowing for lowering of official interest rates to support growth, especially in countries where efforts to cut public spending could put a brake on the economy.

Clearly referring to European Union countries' efforts to qualify next year for monetary union in 1999, but also to Japan, Mr. Shigehara said fiscal consolidation and, above all, structural reform should be based on a medium-term view.

"What we are concerned

about is that consolidation should continue, not just in 1997 but afterwards...so that the euro (single currency) is as strong as the Deutschmark has been," he told Reuters Financial Television.

Asked if European growth was hurt by the mark strength or dollar weakness, Mr. Shigehara said Europe had a "comfortable" competitive position and that recovery should be based on lower long-term interest rates and rising consumption, rather than exports.

The U.S. economy is expected to show more moderate growth of 2.2 per cent in 1997 and 2.0 per cent in 1998 after a slowdown in the second half of this year which should result in growth of 2.4 per cent for 1996 as a whole, the OECD said.

Japan's economy is expected to grow by 3.6 per cent this year despite a slowdown after the strong first-half pick-up. While it is expected to pick up again next year, growth could be limited to 1.6 per cent due to spending cuts and tax rises before taking off in 1998 with a projected growth rate of 3.7 per cent.

Growth in the European Union is expected to pick up with an increase of 2.4 per cent next year and 2.7 per cent in 1998 after growth of 1.6 per cent this year.

Germany will expand by 2.2 per cent in 1997 and 2.6 per cent in 1998 after growing by 1.1 per cent this year.

The OECD said the risk of deflation in Japan had receded and the big question both there and in most

European countries was whether economic recovery would become self-sustained.

"In Europe, fiscal retrenchment is already operating as a negative force on activity," the report says.

"Although fiscal consolidation should help economic performance over time, there is a question as to whether the short-run direct negative demand effects of such actions can be fully offset by favourable confidence effects as well as by the induced declines in real interest rates," it says.

"In Japan and much of the European Union...the pace of fiscal consolidation in the near term must also reflect the need to nurture nascent economic recovery," the report adds.

The OECD offers no simple advice for the world's largest economy, apart from predicting more moderate growth next year than this year and saying the jury is still out on whether or not inflationary pressures could reemerge.

For Britain, the message is clearer. The OECD report says it expects a further small rise in the official interest rate, or base rate, in 1997 to "lock in low inflation levels" after a 0.25 per cent rise in October.

The star performer of the 28 OECD countries covered in the report — South Korea became the 29th member on Dec. 12 after the report was finished — is Ireland, with expected growth of 7.0 per cent this year and only slightly less in 1997 and 1998.

UAE to privatise non-oil industries

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is planning to sell off five public companies and may privatise the electricity and water sectors as part of economic reforms.

In a study marking 25 years since the Gulf country's creation, the economy and commerce ministry said a stock exchange would be set up soon to facilitate privatisation and attract local and foreign capital.

The enterprises to be sold to the local private sector are Al Ain Cement Factory, Abu Dhabi National Flour Factory, Abu Dhabi National Factory for Pipes, Al Ain Mineral Water Factory and Al Ain Cold Storage and Ice Factory.

"Moreover, the government is currently studying the possibility of privatising the electricity and water sector. The government also intends to reduce its participation in certain domestic development projects in order to encourage private investment," the study said.

Other Gulf oil producers have also launched reforms to diversify their oil-reliant economies.

The study said the UAE needed to map out a long-term strategy to attain sustainable future growth and to lessen dependence on oil export earnings, which provide nearly 90 per cent of the country's total income.

"The strategy should include measures to enhance the industrial awareness to encourage private investment in industry, adoption of a programme to encourage private business through joint ventures and formulation of a new and clear strategy to attract foreign capital," it said.

The UAE is the fourth biggest oil power in the world, with recoverable crude reserves of 98 billion barrels accounting for nearly 10 per cent of global reserves. It also has the third largest gas resources in the world.

Huge investments have led to a steady growth in the country's non-oil sector which has seen its contribution to the gross domestic product rise from 33 per cent to 65 per cent since 1975 and 1995, according to a recent study.

Israel says PLO trade curbs to be met 'in kind'

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel's treasury has warned the PLO the Jewish state would respond "in kind" to plans to impose restrictions on foreign-made goods imported by Israeli agents into the self-ruled West Bank and Gaza.

Treasury Director-General David Brodet said in a statement at the end of two days of meetings with senior Palestinian economic officials the restrictions — due to go into effect on Jan. 1 — were in violation of an Israeli-PLO accord which established a free trade area between the sides.

"Israel will be forced to respond in kind," the treasury quoted Mr. Brodet as telling the meeting. It did not elaborate on what steps Israel would take in response.

Since August, Palestinian

trade officials have announced a number of trade restrictions to be implemented at the new year, including barring Israeli importers from selling certain brands of vehicles and cigarettes in self-ruled Gaza and the West Bank.

The measures are aimed at bolstering Palestinian firms.

The treasury said in a statement the Palestinian self-rule authority had turned down a request by Mr. Brodet to delay implementation of the restrictions.

On Tuesday, Palestinian Trade and Industry Minister Maher Al Masri told Israeli businessmen the trade regulations would be imposed gradually and with flexibility.

The authority, which took over parts of the West Bank and Gaza under a 1993 self-rule deal, has eased depen-

dence on the Israeli economy, fostering trade with Jordanian and Egyptian firms.

The statement said the sides did agree that Israel would transfer to the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) tax revenues levied on Palestinians from May-December 1994.

In return, the PNA agreed to pay debts it owed to seven Israeli hospitals, to Bezeq Israel Telecom, and to Israel's Mekorot water utility, the statement said.

The PNA also agreed to reach a formal accord on settling debts between Israeli and Palestinian businesses.

The Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce has estimated that Palestinian firms owe companies in the Jewish state hundreds of millions of dollars.

REUTERS

REUTERS

The Business of Information

Major Currencies & Cross Rates									
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY	CAD	ITL	NLE	FRF
US Dollar	1.5509	0.5984	1.3335	114.25	1.2683	1525.83	1.7389	5.2450	
DE Mark	0.6448		0.2656	0.8997	73.65	0.8819	93.46	1.1218	3.3818
GB Sterling	1.5710	2.5925		2.2250	190.09	2.2864	2549.86	2.9074	8.7644
CH Franc	0.7499	1.1626	0.4485		85.65	3.0257	1143.80	130.82	3.9318
JP Yen	0.0088	1.3569	0.5234	1.1667		1.1971	13.35	152.22	4.5888
CA Dollar	0.7308	1.1408	0.4394	0.9793	1.20		1121.87	1.2807	3.8556
IT Lira	0.0007	1.0158	0.3918	0.0873	1337.43	0.8962		11.40	3.4352
NL Guilder	0.5747	89.71	0.3437	76.63	85.62	0.7862	876.66		3.0136
FR Franc	0.1907	0.2956	0.1140	25.4145	21.76	0.2608	33.16	33.1600	

Energy		Unit	Previous
Brent	24.35	24.95	
W. Texas	26.05	26.50	
Bony	24.35	24.95	
Dubai	21.82	21.88	
UL Gas	214.00	209.00	

Mid-East Currencies					
Currency	USD	DEM	GBP	CHF	JPY
SA Riyal	0.2666	0.4137	0.15856	0.35568	30.4757
AE Dirham	0.2723	0.42242	0.16284	0.36321	31.1207
KW Dinar	3.3372	5.17866	1.9972	4.45236	381.388
BH Dinar	3.3770	4.11523	1.5973	3.54857	303.274
CY Pound	2.1194	3.287	1.268	2.8262	242.142

Metal Prices		
Metal	Bid	Offer
Gold (oz's)	368.4	368.9
Silver (oz's)	4.52	4.84
Platinum (oz's)	371.75	372.75
AL (3 Months)	1553	1556
CU (3 Months)	2140	2145
Zinc (3 Months)	1065	1068
Lead (3 Months)	711	714
NL (3 Months)	6630	6660

Currency Deposit Rates (Bid)					
Period	1 -	3 -	6 -	9 -	1 -
Cncy	Month	Months	Months	Months	Year
USD	5.53	5.46	5.50	5.56	5.65
GBP	6.25	6.31	6.30	6.32	6.81
JPY	0.12	0.18	0.31	0.36	0.38
DEM	3.19	3.13	3.12	3.12	3.12
FRF	3.25	3.28	3.30	3.30	3.28
CHF	1.93	1.87	1.94	1.91	1.87
ITL	7.21	7.02	6.69	6.53	6.40

Energy		
Commodity	Last	Delivery
Coffee (c/lbs)	115	Spot
Cocoa (c/lbs)	1388	Spot
Sugar (c/lbs)	308.5	Spot
Wheat (c/lbs)	137	Spot
Soya (c/lbs)	21.69	Spot
Tea (kg/kg)	125	Spot
Barley (c/lbs)	217	Spot
Rice (c/lbs)	470	Spot

JOD Cross Rates		
Currency	Buy	Sell
US Dollar	0.708	0.710
GB Sterling	1.1824	1.1883
DE Mark	0.4558	0.4581
CH Franc	0.5302	0.5329
FR Franc	0.135	0.1357
JP Yen	0.6188	0.6219
NL Guilder	0.4061	0.4081
IT Lira	0.4633	0.4656

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

Libya to spend \$5.5b on energy projects

SFAX, Tunisia (R) — Libya plans to spend more than \$5.5 billion on five major energy projects over the next four to five years, a Libyan senior energy official has said.

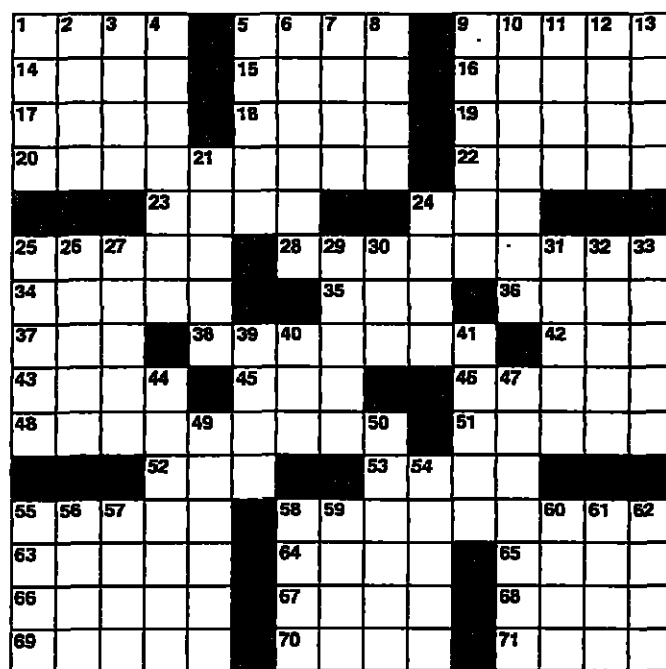
Fouad Hajjaji, manager of maintenance and projects department at the Libyan state-owned company National Oil Corp (NOC) told an energy forum that the projects were only "some of the major projects" currently handled by NOC's subsidiaries. "The combined cost of the projects

exceeds \$5.5 billion," Mr. Hajjaji said. An official of Italy's AGIP SPA said in Tunis that the company has reached a framework agreement worth \$2.1 billion with NOC for the joint development of some offshore and onshore natural gas and condensate field in western Libya and the construction of a pipeline to Sicily. Mr. Hajjaji said that NOC controls nine affiliated operating companies in Libya, some of which are fully owned and the others set up a joint venture

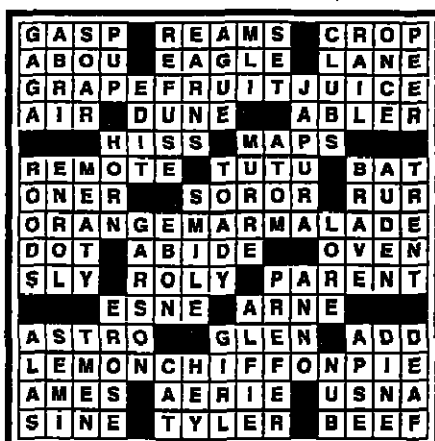
partnership with multinational oil companies. He said that more than 50 oilfields and five gas fields are currently in production in Libya. "In recent years new fields in Murzuk and Ghadames basins in the south west of the country and offshore Libya are also being developed and are expected to be on stream in the near future," Mr. Hajjaji said. Libya presently has also 5,500 kilometres of major oil pipelines and 2,000 kilometres of major gas pipelines, he added.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- "This one's —"
 - R.B.I. or E.R.A.
 - Exploit
 - Drudge
 - Mahjongg piece
 - a time
 - Andy's radio partner
 - instant (immediately)
 - Characteristic
 - Kibitzer's activity
 - German city
 - Comic Johnson
 - Drop
 - Frighten
 - Concocted
 - Light unit
 - Yoko — Lennon
 - Poet Teasdale
 - Corroded
 - Yuletide potables
 - Vegas
 - Full complement of planets
 - Curtain holder
 - River ducks
 - Throws out
 - Elevate
 - Pathetic
 - Frown: var.
 - Pulitzer poet
 - Begins a journey
 - David's defense against Goliath
 - Clock
 - measurement
 - Gardner's need
 - From then on
 - Atlanta arena
 - Something outstanding
 - "The — and the Dead" (Mailer)
 - Cossets
 - Mountain lake



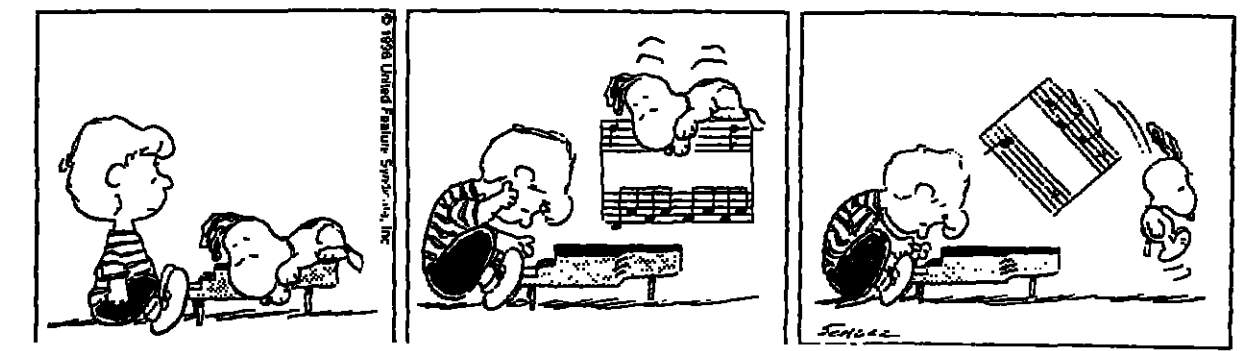
by C.F. Murray



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- DOWN
- Brightly-colored fish
 - Jules Verne hero
 - Secure a vessel
 - Trap
 - Tour of duty
 - Slightly colored
 - Kirghiz mountain range
 - Nashville's state: abbr.
 - NYC
 - Angers
 - Signet
 - Follow
 - Major end
 - Goodnight girl
 - Air pollution
 - Street talk
 - Pretty little girl
 - Flower spike
 - Musical composition
 - Número —
 - Lama
 - Mountain range
 - Old hat
 - Puzzle's place
 - Mars or Ares
 - Swagger
 - Perfume
 - Hearing range
 - Roamed
 - Parade
 - ostentatiously
 - Fragrant
 - rootstock
 - Org.
 - Hip bones
 - Crap or knot
 - Boutique
 - Scholarly book
 - Lady Chaplin
 - Addict
 - Sea bird

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR SUNDAY DECEMBER 22, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get into research career activities and studies today which can help you to improve your important affairs. Later tonight will be a good time to meet with fellow associates and discuss a plan of action for your success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You need to get in touch with many persons today who can give you backing for some project which means a great deal. Tonight will be a good time for you to seek out the suggestions of a knowledgeable person and follow through.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Do whatever today will gain you much prestige with the public. Try not to upset any influential people or you could discover that your career activities will be much more difficult in the days ahead and be forth with disaster.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Get your home in fine condition today and thereby you can make your career activities much more successful. Take care of your health later this evening, and you will see a change for the better for yourself and your loved ones.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) This is a good day to get together with friends at whatever hobby or pleasure you like, and be cheerful in the days ahead. Later this evening will be a good time to seek out the advice of knowledgeable people and use what is given.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can be happiest today in your home during the daytime, however, take care you do not have guests in tonight who are rowdy and could cause a disturbance which could make your life quite difficult.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 23) This is a good day to wander about for information which you will need to complete a new project. After a busy day, later this evening get into bed early and get all the rest you need to tackle any difficult situation.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Study your property today and plan how to improve it. Try to economise this evening and stay home with your loved ones and they will appreciate your thoughtfulness, so that you can maintain harmony which exists.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Pursue your personal goals today with courage and conviction which will be appreciated by those in authority. The evening is good for peace and quiet, so don't make any jokes about your loved ones which could be misinterpreted.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Get into studies or see experts who can give you data you need in order to get ahead faster, so don't create a scene which can make your life more difficult. Later this evening you can make your life more successful.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You can be your gregarious self today and you can enjoy the company of many friends. Later this evening will be a good time for you to make your plans heard by a bigwig and thereby make your life more successful.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Get your talents to the attention today of bigwigs who can be of great help to you. Later this evening you can seek out the advice of knowledgeable people and use their suggestions to make your life more enjoyable.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon

Daily Beat

A review of news from the Arabic press

Reduction of customs on cars seen killing assembly plant projects

“A STRONG blow to the national industry” — this was the description given by a car dealer in response to the government's announced plan to reduce customs tariffs on cars from the beginning of next year. The dealer said the move would minimize the possibility of establishing car-assembly plants in Jordan because the gap of customs between industry and trade will be narrowed. Under the present situation, customs on imported cars are high compared to customs tariffs on spare parts.

Another dealer, who also requested anonymity, described the government intention to reduce customs tariffs on imported cars as a smart step by the authorities to curb customs evasion. He said the government did not intend to “build” investments on wrong basis and people, in turn, would avoid undertaking industrial projects based on customs protection. The dealer, however, agreed that the feasibility of setting up assembly plants in the Kingdom would “disappear” (Al-Ahram).

Zarqa mayor succeeds in boosting revenue for municipality

“ZARQA MUNICIPALITY has been able to boost its revenue by JD2.1 million this year, JD1 million more than the revenue projected in the 1996 budget. According to Zarqa Mayor Mustafa Fayyad, revenue during the January-November period amounted to JD7.6 million. He attributed the rise in revenue to the seriousness in collecting the municipality's dues in addition to the facilities given to the people of Zarqa when collecting licensing fees. Dr. Fayyad said the people owed the municipality an accumulated amount exceeding JD2 million.

Dr. Fayyad said the municipality was able to convince nearly 1,500 traders to license their businesses as they were operating without any licence in the past. He added that a major achievement was in successfully combating bribery which he blamed on the people who in the past had avoided paying their dues by resorting to pay bribes (Al-Rai).

Arabs create credit-rating body for banks

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Arab states have created the long-sought body which will unify credit-rating standards for regional banks as part of reforms spurred by BIS capital adequacy rules, officials said Saturday.

The new company was set up by the Abu Dhabi-based Arab Monetary Fund (AMF) and it has started establishing subsidiaries throughout the region to ensure coverage for the 22 members of the Arab League.

“The AMF has established a company for credit-rating in the Arab World in cooperation with the World Bank's International Finance Corporation and other international organisations,” AMF Chairman Jassim Al Manai said.

Mr. Manai's comments were read by AMF's technical and economic department director, Faris Bin Jaradi, at a meeting of the Arab Auditing Committee, which was created recently to oversee bank reforms in the region and ensure all Arab banks meet capital adequacy requirements recommended eight years ago by Basle Committee of the Bank for International Settlements (BIS).

Basle's deputy secretary general, Charles Freedland, was present at the meeting, which will also be auditing other banking activities.

Arab states hope their bank reforms will persuade Basle to cancel its classification of them as high risk countries in lending activity.

Saudi Arabia, the world's top oil supplier, was the only Arab country to have been excluded from that classification on the grounds it was the fifth biggest creditor of the World Bank.

Arab monetary officials have held a series of meetings with Basle Committee over the past few years to explain their reforms, which include stronger supervision of local banks by their central banks, supply of periodical financial statements, and boosting their capital.

The reforms were mainly carried out in the oil-rich Gulf, where many banks said they had exceeded the BIS's adequacy level of at least eight per cent after raising their shareholders equity, covering capital and reserves.

Arab states were particularly concerned about that classification because it made it difficult for them to obtain bank loans from industrial countries at a time when they are in bad need for cash to finance economic reforms.

Mr. Jaradi said the new company at the AMF, a regional IMF-style institution, had set up two subsidiaries in Tunisia and Egypt to cover North Africa. Three more

branches will be established in the Gulf and other areas soon.

He said such companies would work to unify rating measures, bridge the gap in auditing practices in the Arab World and assess investment opportunities.

“There is no doubt that such rating services will strengthen the official auditing systems such as the central banks and stock exchanges in supervising and controlling the activities of financial institutions. This will enable us to protect the rights of investors and bank clients,” he said.

Bankers said such credit-rating facilities would also help prevent fresh banking

crises in the region as they will allow authorities to have a greater access to the banks and to intervene in time in case of a crisis.

They referred to banking problems in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Egypt, Lebanon, Sudan and other member states as well as the 1991 collapse of the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, which was controlled by the UAE.

Arab states have more than 350 commercial banks, with their shareholders' equity standing at around \$69 billion at the end of 1995. Assets were estimated at \$911 billion and deposits at \$465.1 billion.

Belly dancers reportedly fifth largest source of revenue to Egypt

CAIRO (AFP) — Egypt's 12 most famous belly dancers pay annually the equivalent of \$264 million in taxes, making them the country's fifth largest source of income, the Arab weekly Al-Wassat has reported.

“The stars such as Fifi Abdou, Lucy and Dina pay most of the sum,” the weekly magazine said.

According to the report, the belly dancers pay some 900 million pounds in taxes (around \$264 million) each year.

“This represents the fifth source of revenues for the state after receipts from the Suez Canal, tourism, oil and cotton,” Al-Wassat said, quoting a treasury report. Commented Fifi Abdou: “This shows that we are better than most other people who avoid their duties toward the country.”

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET											
MAJLIS BANK CENTER AMMAN - JORDAN											
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 22/12/1996											
PAST 12 MONTHS HIGH	PAST 12 MONTHS LOW	COMPANY'S NAME	P/E	DIV.	NO. OF SHARES	VALUE TRADED	OPEN PRICE	CLOSE PRICE	CHANGE	PERCENTAGE	MARKET SHARE
259,500	20,300	ARAB BANK	12.5	1.1%	5	561	114.11	114.11	0.00	0.00	1.1%
4,700	700	CAIRO AMMAN BANK	9.1	1.3%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
3,800	400	BANK OF JORDAN	11.4	1.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
7,700	1,100	INDUSTRIAL DEV. BK.	5.0	0.3%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
2,300	300	THE JORDANIAN BK.	11.2	1.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
3,040	440	JOR. KIWAT BANK	19.6	0.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
1,100	100	JOR. COOP. BANK	5.7	0.1%	13	1041	99.95	99.95	0.00	0.00	0.1%
4,180	480	JOR. ISLAMIC BANK	17.5	0.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
3,800	500	JOR. INT. FIN. BANK	19.6	0.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
3,200	1,800	BEIT AL-HAL (BEITRA)	1.1	0.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
1,550	1,000	PHILADEL. INT. BK.	9	0.2%	2	111	55.55	55.55	0.00	0.00	0.2%
BANK SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 192.29	CHG: -0.64	64	56144	410947				
2,840	1,810	JOR. FRENCH INSUR.	9.5	10.00	7	1643	3235	3.23	1.96	6.04	1.4%
INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 127.58	CHG: -0.21	7	1643	3235				
1,830	1,450	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.5	7.23	12	1242	27492	1.67	1.68	0.01	0.1%
9,250	7,900	JOR. HOTEL TOURISM	16.8	0.21	2	322	2496	7.90	7.90	0.00	0.1%
1,540	700	IRAB ELECTRICITY	9.3	0.34	13	1041	99.95	99.95	0.00	0.00	0.1%
5,950	4,700	ARAB INTL. HOTELS	17.6	0.68	1	150	688	4.62	4.62	0.00	0.1%
1,830	1,040	HATIL PORTFOLIO	9	0.20	8	5136	6120	1.21	1.21	0.00	0.2%
1,240	590	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	38.5	0.20	10	5450	4011	0.71	0.71	0.00	0.1%
1,800	460	MACH. REP. REST. MAIN.	9	0.20	4	236	236	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.1%
10,310	1,000	ALRAI	9.5	0.25	2	200	1624	7.77	8.00	0.23	0.3%
2,080	1,150	HID. EAST HOTELS	98.5	0.20	4	1290	2087	1.64	1.65	0.01	0.1%
1,250	400	JAR. SECURIZATION	9	0.20	3	3100	4108	1.35	1.35	0.00	0.1%
2,310	1,650	UNIFIED CO.	10.8	4.25	3	12500	56705	2.14	2.16	0.02	0.1%
1,200	820	UNION LAND DEV.	8	0.20	3	253	129	0.89	0.89	0.00	0.1%
SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 111.52	CHG: -1.29	93	40703	55332				
3,740	1,080	JCI. CHEST FACT.	14.6	1.54	11	14743	56027	3.45	3.42	-0.03	-0.1%
3,550	2,710	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	38.4	0.20	2	75	213	2.83	2.83	0.00	0.1%
10,450	4,720	JOR. PETROL. REFINERY	9.8	0.21	2	144	15035	2.69	2.69	0.00	0.1%
3,750	1,650	INDUSTRIAL COOP. AGR.	42.3	0.30	1	380	2173	3.16	3.16	0.00	0.1%
4,730	2,060	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	19.9	0.20	1	1625	1625	3.65	3.65	0.00	0.1%
2,400	1,570	JOR. PIPES MANFCT.	9.1	1.27	2	630	592	1.96	1.95	-0.01	-0.1%
2,230	1,480	RAPIA INDUSTRIES	7	0.20	5	1570	2186	1.40	1.38	-0.02	-0.1%
7,850	4,750	DAR ALDINAR ST. INV.	13.2	0.20	12	1242	27492	2.65	2.65	0.00	0.1%
5,800	3,130	ARAB ALUM. IND.	9.0	0.29	12	2752	9886	3.63	3.62	-0.01	-0.1%
960	450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.20	14	12146	7650	0.64	0.63	-0.01	-0.1%
1,460	1,060	ARAB PAPER CON. TRD.	7.9	0.53	12	6700	5438	1.16	1.16	0.00	0.1%
1,060	540	UNION. TRDS.	10.5	0.45	55	48800	16258	3.65	3.65	0.00	0.1%
1,750	330	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.30	9	4052	4666	1.17	1.14	-0.03	-0.1%
3,550	2,280	UNIV. CHEM. INDOS.	78.0	0.00	5	1300	3745	2.83	2.86	0.03	0.1%
4,700	1,430	SEACITE CO.	20.4	0.20	3	260	944	3.63	3.63	0.00	0.1%
5,350	4,330	JOR. WOOD INDOS. JWCIO	18.4	1.34	1	300	1545	5.15	5.15	0.00	0.1%
4,000	1,130	NATL. CABLE WIRE MFG.	16.6	0.00	3	850	1076	2.66	2.72	0.06	0.1%
1,340	670	JOR. SUBSID. CHEM.	9	0.20	6	125	1498	0.87	0.86	-0.01	-0.1%
1,850	1,080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	27.7	0.07	5	1122	10428	1.92	1.89	-0.03	-0.1%
3,260	1,440	UNIV. MODR. INDOS.	5.1	12.42	30	17325	30421	1.77	1.75	-0.02	-0.1%
2,080	1,140	JOR. INTS. RESOURCES	11.3	0.20	3	3150	4567	1.45	1.45	0.00	0.1%
1,500	840	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	26.9	0.20	3	1800	12801	1.31	1.31	0.00	0.1%
1,440	160	INTL. TOBACCO	30.1	0.00	16	12307	5738	1.33	1.28	-0.05	-0.1%
1,550	730	UNION CH. & VEG.	24.4	0.20	14	10585	10474	1.02	1.04	0.02	0.1%
INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS			INDEX: 116.33	CHG: -0.67	348	264421	579387				
GRAND TOTAL			INDEX: 182.32	CHG: -0.69	550	458831	1059387				
PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR SATURDAY 22/12/1996											
790	440	CENTRAL GEN. STORAGE	22.1	0.23	2	1000	550	0.57	0.55	-0.02	-0.1%
800	510	JOR. TRADE FAC.	14.4	0.23	12	5620	2132	0.55	0.54	-0.01	-0.1%
700	400	UNION INV. SOI	45.8	0.20	18	7642	17652	0.73	0.72	-0.01	-0.1%
1,060	470	ARAB FIN. INVEST.	9	0.00	9	7749	3583	0.47	0.46	-0.01	-0.1%
950	390	AL-DAMLIYAN 75	15.8	0.20	5	1521	684	0.70	0.70	0.00	0.1%
1,050	350	UNITED FOR FARM. INV.	5	0.20	258	258	258	0.95	0.95	0.00	0.1%
810	510	ARAB FOOD & MED.	8	0.20	4	2023	1498	0.69	0.69	0.00	0.1%
1,760	1,300	NATL. CHLORINE	8	0.20	1	2005	1470	1.42	1.40	-0.02	-0.1%
700	450	ARAB INTL. INV. TRD.	9	0.20	15	50930	15450	0.85	0.85	0.00	0.1%
930	510	NATL. TEXTILE	8	0.20	600	600	600	0.99	0.99	0.00	0.1%
1,030	700	NATL. MULT. ENG. MANF.	9	0.20	24	35100	10736	0.49	0.49	0.00	0.1%
770	30	KATZAR DICE & MOUNDS	8	0.20	1	750	227	0.76	0.76	0.00	0.1%
1,010	10	JORDAN STEEL	8	0.20	1	750	227	0.76	0.76	0.00	0.1%
1,330	1,020	UNION TOBACCO 75	8	0.01	1	7365	5954	1.06	1.06	0.00	0.1%
810	510	INDOS. SOG.	25.9	0.01	200	8352	1500	0.81	0.80	-0.01	-0.1%
810	490	KATE PHARM. 65	9	0.01	200	25100	10565	0.81	0.80	-0.01	-0.1%
960	460	TEXTILE MANF.	9	0.00	2	92	353	0.47	0.47	0.00	0.1%
960	460	PEARL SAN. P. CONV.	8	0.00	1	179	69	0.69	0.69	0.00	0.1%
850	580	NATL. POLYMER	8	0.00	1	10300	6600	0.66	0.66	0.00	0.1%
900	400	ARAB INT. FOOD FACT.	64.6	0.01	2	1017	935	0.92	0.92	0.00	0.1%
1,500	530	HID. EAST COMPLEX	7.7	0.00	34	55100	36506	0.67	0.66	-0.01	-0.1%
GRAND TOTAL					190	294115	136157				

Mutual funds find Israel a hard sell to investors

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli stocks are undervalued and the market has great potential, but the country is a tough sell with investors and tougher still because of growing concerns about Middle East peace, foreign mutual fund managers say.

“We see the current uncertainty raising the political risk premium of the market... It will have a lower valuation than it could,” said one European manager of a Middle East regional fund heavily weighted towards Israel.

As a result, the fund plans to cut its Israel weighting by nearly half over the next quarter — a decision the manager says is partly aimed at making the fund more attractive to investors.

“Yes, there's a marketing side. We're always keen to grow the fund,” he said.

The difficulty of selling an Israel country fund was highlighted by this week's announcement the Israel Growth Fund, an open-ended fund managed by New England Life, would wind up in January after raising just \$11.5 million over its nine-month life.

“It's being closed simply because there wasn't demand for the product,” Adam Schor, portfolio manager and an analyst at Chicago-based Harris Associates, told Reuters.

In the meantime, Israel's gross domestic product (GDP) growth has slowed from 7.1 per cent in 1995 to an estimated 3.8 per cent this year, with growth of 4.0

per cent projected for 1997.

“All of this made people reluctant to invest in Israel and to overlook a compelling investment case,” Mr. Schor said.

Mr. Tennant said the events of the last year had not caused investors to retreat from Israel but he said others considering the market were taking a wait-and-see attitude.

Fund managers said they were cautiously optimistic about next year, but their focus was more on issues such as the budget deficit and interest rates than on Middle East peace.

“We're forecasting a reasonable dollar return for the market in 1997, but we see it underperforming regional markets,” said the European manager.

Ebru Oezgen, who manages the \$43 million emerging Middle East Fund for Foreign and Colonial, has about 13-14 per cent of the fund in Israeli stocks.

“We've slightly reduced it. We want to see what will happen with the budget and interest rates,” she said.

As the economy slows, managers say they are moving out of the domestic plays that were supposed to benefit from Israel's fast-growing economy and into export-oriented and New York-traded Israeli high-tech companies.

“We are putting more emphasis on Wall Street stocks relative to our investment theme a year ago,” said Ms. Oezgen.

But Ezer Soref, of Giza, which is a local sub-adviser for the \$70 million First Israel Fund, said the slowing economy would not have an impact on the market. “Prices on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange are so low, they have already had the slowdown built into them,” he said.

Fund managers do not express strong views on the impact of peacemaking. “I blow hot and cold from day to day,” said one manager, “depending if another goofy statement comes out of the government.”

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MCENROE HOLDS CUP AFTER WINNING EXHIBITION MATCH: John McEnroe displays his trophy after winning the "Nike Cup", a benefit tennis exhibition, in New York Friday. Pete Sampras, Andre Agassi, Jim Courier, and McEnroe played in six 20 minute round-robin singles matches in the event. The one-night event benefited the Tim and Tom Gullikson Foundation (Reuters photo)

Mitchell sets world short course record for 200m breaststroke

MELBOURNE, Australia (AFP) — Australian Ryan Mitchell smashed the world record for 200 metres breaststroke in a special time trial at the Australian Short Course Swimming Championships here late Saturday.

Mitchell, a 19-year-old from south Australia, clocked 2 minutes 07.66 seconds to clip 0.14s from the previous world record established in the same pool by his training partner Phillip Rogers in 1993.

The Atlanta Olympian thought his chances of breaking the world record were dashed when judges disqualified him for an incorrect turn in the morning heats.

He was disqualified for a non-simultaneous turn at the 75 metre mark and despite a protest from his coach Glen Beringer and supporting video evidence the jury of appeal dismissed the protest.

Mitchell was then granted a special time trial by Australian swimming officials.

"I knew as soon as Phil set that world record back in 1993 that one day I would return here myself to have a crack at it," Mitchell said.

"I have trained and prepared myself for this world record attempt and what a great Christmas present."

In a further twist, the swimmer who took Mitchell's place in the final, Queensland's Hayden Fouch won the gold medal.

In the lead-up to Mitchell's swim, Australian head coach Don Talbot arranged for a selected Australian men's 4x100 metres freestyle relay team to have a crack at the Commonwealth record.

The team of Michael Klim, Richard Upton, Dwade Sheehan and Jeff English had earlier finished first, second, third and fourth in the individual 100 metres final.

Not only did they smash the previous Commonwealth record by 3.08s but Klim made it a double celebration with his own individual mark of 48.38s to lead off the relay.

It was Klim's sixth individual Australian or Australian all-comers record in the first three days of the short-course meet.

Man credited with success of women's tennis dead at 68

SAN FRANCISCO (AP) — Jerry Diamond, former executive director of the Women's Tennis Association, died Monday at age 68. He had been ill with colon cancer.

"It is a very sad day for all of tennis," said WTA Chief Executive Ann Person Worcester. "Jerry was a trailblazer in so many ways and always a great champion of the tour. He leaves behind an important legacy in women's tennis and a void that will be very difficult to fill."

Diamond directed the tour from 1974 to 1985 and is credited with making tennis the most lucrative professional sport for women.

He left his job as an advertising salesman for the San Francisco Chronicle to open his own public relations and advertising company. His relationship with tennis began in 1971, when he was asked to serve as director for a woman's tournament in San Francisco.

It was the second professional tournament, and he turned it into a profitable venture in two years.

After that success, WTA officials asked him to take over the association in

1974, when its total purse was less than \$1 million. When he left 11 years later, that figure had climbed to \$14 million.

Diamond later became president of Roller Hockey International and was owner and manager of the San Francisco International Auto Show.

Diamond is survived by his wife, three sons, a daughter and seven grandchildren.

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Knicks use 76ers' futile 3rd quarter as springboard

NBA ROUNDUP

PHILADELPHIA (R) — Allan Houston scored 32 points and Patrick Ewing 21 as the New York Knicks allowed just 10 points in the third quarter in handing the Philadelphia 76ers their ninth straight loss, 110-103 on Friday.

Ewing also grabbed 14 rebounds and Larry Johnson scored 18 points for New York, which won for the eighth time in nine games. John Starks made six free throws in the final 42 seconds for the Knicks, who were 17-for-20 from the foul line in the fourth quarter.

"This is what it's all about," Ewing said. "Any given night, any player is capable of getting big numbers and tonight it was Allen. We stepped it up defensively."

In Atlanta, ex-Net Mookie Blaylock scored 10 of his 16 points in a 19-3 first-quarter run as the Atlanta Hawks claimed their fifth straight win and ninth in a row at home, cruising past short-handed New Jersey.

109-95.

Steve Smith scored 20 points and seven assists, Eldridge Recasner added 18 points and Christian Laettner contributed 16 points and 11 boards for the Hawks, who led 68-40 at halftime and built a 32-point cushion midway through the third quarter.

"Our game has been great, it's nothing we try and do special, just try and go in and play hard and win the ball game and have fun, especially at home," Dikemba Mutombo said. "We're trying to bring the crowd back here and establish a home advantage."

In Cleveland, Tyronne Hill had 21 points and 13 rebounds and Terrell Brandon added six of his 19 points during a decisive third-quarter run, leading the Cleveland Cavaliers to their season-high fourth straight win, 91-82 over the Toronto Raptors.

Brandon also handed out

eight assists and Danny Ferry contributed 12 points for the Cavaliers.

Brandon hit all six of his free-throw attempts, stretching his streak to 45. Carlos Rogers scored 18 points for Toronto.

In Denver, Bryant Stith scored 11 of his 29 points in the opening quarter as the Denver Nuggets raced to a 13-point lead and never trailed, knocking off the Vancouver Grizzlies, 108-93 in a Midwest division matchup.

Dale Ellis scored 24 points and Ervin Johnson added 19 for Denver, which broke open a 9-9 game by going on a 21-9 run in the first quarter.

At Indiana, Lindsey Hunter scored 20 points and Grant Hill added 18 points, nine rebounds and six assists to lead the Detroit Pistons to their fourth straight win, 84-75 over the Indiana Pacers.

Otis Thorpe contributed

16 points and 15 rebounds for Detroit, which has won nine of its last 10 games.

Reggie Miller had 18 points and Travis Best added 15 for Indiana, which had its three-game winning streak halted.

"This is very disappointing. We have to win more at home and play better in the middle," said Pacers forward Antonio Davis. "We were flat and they just played better."

In Orlando, John Stockton scored 22 points, including seven during a key fourth-quarter run, and handed out 15 assists as the Utah Jazz defeated the Orlando Magic, 98-93 for their 18th win in 20 games.

Karl Malone scored 20 points and grabbed six rebounds, leaving him four boards shy of becoming the 11th player in NBA history to get 20,000-point and 10,000-rebounds.

In Portland, Isaiah Rider scored 12 of his 18 points in

the decisive third quarter as the Portland Trail Blazers snapped a three-game losing streak with a 107-77 victory over the Dallas Mavericks.

Portland used a pair of runs and outscored the Mavericks, 31-10, in the third quarter to take their largest lead, 80-55.

Clifford Robinson scored 21 points and Gary Trent came off the bench to contribute 18 points and nine rebounds for the Trail Blazers.

In Seattle, Gary Payton scored 10 of his 24 points in a huge third-quarter run and Detlef Schrempf added 22 as the Seattle SuperSonics defeated the Los Angeles Clippers for the 14th straight time, 102-86.

Payton and Schrempf combined for 19 points in the third quarter, when the SuperSonics outscored the Clippers, 38-11.

Sam Perkins scored 14 points, Shawn Kemp grabbed 12 rebounds and Payton handed out 11 assists for Seattle.

Stoichkov may have played last game for country

SOFIA (R) — Volatile striker Hristo Stoichkov may have played his last game for Bulgaria.

His demand for changes to the Bulgarian Football Union's hierarchy appeared to have fallen on deaf ears on Friday when Ivan Slavkov was re-elected president at an extraordinary congress, called after complaints about the union management.

Stoichkov, who flew from Barcelona to attend the congress as a guest, left before the results of the vote were announced but had vowed he would quit playing for the national side if the management was not replaced.

Stoichkov, widely recognised as Bulgaria's most gifted player, criticised union officials for axing former coach Dimitar Penev and dropping his nephew Lyuboslav Penev from the national team.

He also took a swipe at the union for accommodating the team at "a low standard" hotel in Scarborough during the European Championships in England earlier this year.

"A liquidation of the national soccer team has been performed within the last year," Stoichkov told the congress.

Asked whether Stoichkov's absence would affect the national team, Slavkov said: "This is not a grocery. It is up to him whether he plays."

Slavkov's reappointment will please Hristo Bonev, head coach of the national side. He said on Thursday he would resign if the congress elected a president with whom he was unable to work.

Cruyff hits crisis-ridden Barcelona with new law suit

BARCELONA (R) — Former Barcelona coach Johan Cruyff has lodged a case of defamation of character against club president Jose Luis Nunez.

His lawyer Damian Telles said the law suit related to remarks made by Nunez after Cruyff was sacked in May.

In a heated press conference made the day after firing the Dutchman, Nunez accused Cruyff of favouring his son Jordi over other squad members, of using players who were still recovering from injuries

and of selling his support to candidates in club elections.

Cruyff has opened a series of other cases because of allegedly unpaid wages and bonuses but last month decided against opening a criminal case for slander against Nunez.

Since then Barcelona have been hit by a series of problems following the 2-0 defeat at arch-rivals Real Madrid.

Albert Ferrer's admission that he had received an offer from Real, together with criticism of the club

board for not paying former reserve players as much as foreign imports brought an impassioned reaction from Nunez.

"Those who humiliate the club ... have their days numbered," he threatened.

Angry fans reacted by spraying graffiti criticising Nunez and team coach Bobby Robson on the walls of the Camp Nou Stadium, and demonstrators carrying placards were dragged away by security guards amidst ugly scenes during Thursday's training session.

To add to the problems, top striker Ronaldo returned to Barcelona with criticisms of Robson's strategy.

"I feel more comfortable...playing with the Brazilian team," he said.

Ferrer has abandoned his plans to move to Madrid but has paid for his perceived disloyalty by being dropped from the squad for Sunday's game against Celta Vigo.

The match is likely to see fresh protests against the club management.

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Settlers, Palestinians clash in tense Hebron



A Palestinian man, his face bloodied after being violently arrested by Israeli police in Hebron on Saturday, leans with his hands tied behind his back from the rear door of a police jeep as he is taken to detention (Reuters photo)

HEBRON (Agencies) — Clashes broke out between Palestinian residents and Israeli settlers and soldiers in Hebron Saturday, as a U.S. mediator was set to resume mediation between Israelis and Palestinians.

Soldiers in helmets, with guns cocked, hit, kicked and punched stone-throwing Palestinians after fights broke out between Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the city. At least one Palestinian was beaten unconscious.

The rising tensions followed accusations by Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat that U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, who was to arrive late Saturday to mediate flagging peace talks between Israel and the Palestinians, was biased in Israel's favour.

Mr. Ross was expected to meet with Mr. Arafat later Saturday, and with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Sunday in an effort to help break the deadlock in negotiations over a long-delayed Israeli troop redeployment from Hebron.

Saturday's fighting broke out along the main road running alongside Jewish settlements in Hebron's Old City. Some 200 Jewish settlers, many of them armed, exchanged blows and insults with 100 Palestinian residents before Israeli troops intervened to separate them.

Several Palestinians were beaten and kicked by Israeli troops before some were taken away in police vans. One Palestinian was taken to hospital with a bloody nose and mouth.

It was unclear what sparked the latest round of confrontation. Palestinian witnesses said

the incident began when settlers assaulted Palestinian grade school students on their way home from school. They said the settlers, Jewish seminary students, were dancing in the street in celebration of the Jewish Sabbath.

"When the Palestinian students walked by, the settlers started pulling their hair," said Hamdah Zarouh, a Palestinian resident of Hebron. "I saw one settler hitting students with his belt. Then everything broke loose and people from both sides gathered."

Jewish settlers refused to talk to reporters.

Israel Radio said the incident started in a scuffle between a Palestinian girl and a Jewish settler girl. Both were detained for questioning by the Israeli police, the report said.

"Don't cry. Raise your head up high, you are a hero," an old man said to an 11-year-old girl as police roughly pushed her into a police van.

Israeli troops arrested several Palestinian youths after dozens pelted the troops with stones and tomatoes.

Settlers clapped as Israeli troops carried out arrests and pushed back the Palestinians who had gathered at the site. Settlers also pushed and kicked reporters trying to record the events.

Earlier, settlers threw plastic pipes and eggs at Palestinians trying to enter an office of the Palestinian Islamic Trust on the same street, which oversees mosques and other Islamic holy sites. Settlers blocked the doorway of the building for several minutes before Israeli troops cleared them away.

Negotiations over the troop redeployment in the city, which was agreed to in the autonomy accords signed between the two sides, have been deadlocked for several months. The sides have been unable to agree over Israel's demands to intensify security arrangements for the 450 Jewish settlers living amidst 120,000 Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu has demanded that Israeli troops, who are to remain in 15 per cent of the city to guard the Jewish population and holy shrines, be allowed broader authorities than stipulated in the original agreement in order to ensure the safety of the settlers.

The Palestinians, who would like to see the settlers removed from the city, insist the agreement has already been signed.

Mr. Ross, who has mediated the talks in recent months, was to return Saturday. On Friday, Mr. Arafat said Mr. Ross "has to be an accurate mediator, not to be biased to the side of the Israelis."

Meanwhile, Palestinian officials were angered over Mr. Netanyahu's policies to expand Jewish settlements in the West Bank and to build a Jewish complex inside an Arab neighbourhood in Arab East Jerusalem.

"The Palestinian side is still committed to the peace process, but at the same time Israel is building settlements," said a statement from the Palestinian cabinet late Friday. "The building of settlements is a real violation of the agreements."

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Saturday rejected U.S. Secretary of

State Warren Christopher's claim that Israel had made concessions to the Palestinians in the deadlocked Hebron negotiations.

Mr. Arafat was "at my home yesterday. I did not understand there had been any Israeli concessions and I fear that (such comments) are part of a media campaign," said Mr. Mubarak at a press conference with Greek President Costas Stephanopoulos in Cairo.

The Egyptian leader said the "three main issues" blocking the Hebron talks "persist, and these suggestions (of concessions) are without substance."

Mr. Christopher, announcing a decision to send Mr. Ross back to the region, said earlier this week that "the Israelis have made some moves in connection with Hebron. It is time for the Palestinians. Chairman Arafat, to respond to those moves, to reciprocate those moves."

But Mr. Mubarak rejected Mr. Christopher's call to Mr. Arafat to yield ground in the talks.

"We want things to be clear: the Palestinian concessions were made when the accords were signed with (former Israeli prime ministers) Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres. So what are these new concessions?" he said.

The Palestinian cabinet, meeting late Friday, issued a statement condemning "the statements by certain State Department officials who are not describing fairly the state of the negotiations and do not realise the intransigence of Israel."

Carreras to celebrate Valentine's Day in Beirut

BEIRUT (AFP) — World-famous tenor Jose Carreras will perform for the first time in the Middle East at two concerts in Beirut next February, the Lebanese organiser of the event said Saturday.

"This is a first for Carreras in the Middle East and it will be the most important concert held in Lebanon in a very long time," Richard Pharaon, director of the We Group agency, told AFP. Pharaon said his company had been negotiating the deal with the Spanish opera singer for the past four years before the star agreed to perform for two nights in Beirut on Feb. 14 and 15. "It will also be great because the first concert will be held on Valentine's Day and we even expect a lot of people to come from abroad to attend the concerts," he said.

"More than 20,000 people are expected to come to the concerts that will most probably be held in a hall especially built for the occasion," he said, adding that tickets will be priced between \$75 and \$200. "This occasion will help revive Beirut's image and boost tourism in the country," said Pharaon whose firm has brought to Beirut, since the end of Lebanon's 1975-1990 civil war, performers such as Charles Aznavour, Patricia Kaas, Claude Barzotti and Jimmy Somerville. We Group has also plans to bring in the Spanish Rafael Aguilar ballet group to perform Georges Bizet's Carmen next March.

Israeli singer stunned by British band's hit song

TEL AVIV (AP) — Idit Shechtman, a soldier in the Israeli army was shocked when she heard a hit song on MTV by the popular British band Spice Girls. "I screamed, that's my song," said the 19-year-old songwriter and composer comparing her song "Come to Me" and the one that took Spice Girls to the top of the charts. The music and lyrics were so similar that lawyers at the Israeli organisation for composers' rights decided to look into the two songs and the possibility that the hit song "Say You'll Be There" is actually Idit's. In London Spice Girls attorney Gerland Tyrrel issued a statement saying his clients have never heard Shechtman's song. "The Spice Girls have never heard of the artist or her song," he said. He added that no claim had been received nor had legal proceedings been initiated. Nili Werker, a lawyer for Israel's society of authors, composers and editors of music said music engineers were checking to see if the similarities could lead to a lawsuit against Spice Girls. "The melody is the same, the words are the same and many of the words even fall on the same notes," Shechtman said in a phone interview with the Associated Press.

Institutionalised, genuine and active democracy is basic pillar of human rights, training course is told

By Maria Bizri
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Respect for human rights can be ensured in an atmosphere of institutionalised, genuine and active democracy, activists gathered for an Amman forum said Saturday.

The emphasis was made at the closing ceremony of one-week training course for human rights activists organised by the Arab Organisation for Human Rights (AOHR) and the Arab Institute for Human Rights (AIHR).

"Any discrimination based on race or colour or any other consideration is a violation of basic human rights," said Labib Kanhaw, vice-president of the AOHR.

Such discrimination cannot prevail in a country which has "an institutionalised, genuine and active democracy," which thus becomes the basic pillar of respect for human rights, he added.

Seventeen non-governmental organisations sent 40 delegates to the training course, named "The Suleiman Hadidi Course"

after a leading activist, which focused on mechanisms designed to ensure respect for human rights in the Arab World.

Senator Laila Sharaf, member of the AIHR, addressed participants stressing the increasing need for developing the concept of human rights not only in Jordan but also in the Middle East as a whole.

She added that human rights activists must tackle not only political rights, but a combination of social, economic, and civil rights.

Ahmad Al Lawzi, speaker of the Upper House of Parliament, said the Amman event was organised in line with worldwide action towards the consolidation of human rights.

"A comprehensive view of Islam would reveal its concentration on human rights in its emphasis on freedom, equality and justice," Mr. Lawzi told the closing session. He called on all members of the society to work together to promote respect for human rights.

Mr. Lawzi said the

Jordanian Constitution thoroughly discusses the pillars of human rights and that the problem generally lies in its implementation, which he described as the responsibility not only of the government but also of the citizens.

Rakan Khaled Shayab, a participant in the training course and a member of Yarmouk University's Human Rights Club, said the course involved workshops concerning mechanisms of fact-finding and monitoring human rights violations in an objective manner regardless of individual beliefs and viewpoints.

Noting that Jordan is a signatory to international conventions on human rights, the Yarmouk University student said Jordanian human rights activists should closely study government reports to determine their validity and objectivity.

"Our responsibilities, within our respective organisations, are to find facts objectively and compare national, internal and constitutional legislations with international regula-

tions on human rights," Mr. Shayab said.

Yasser Ajlouni, also a course participant and a student at law at Yarmouk University, said the workshop took a critical look at the legitimacy of certain laws. One of its findings was the "unconstitutionality" of the Jordanian election law, he said.

AOHR President Hani Dahlah said the status of human rights in Jordan was progressing positively.

Speaking on the fringes of the meeting, Mr. Dahlah added that courses such as the one held in Amman signalled the start of a "new era" in respect to human rights.

"Such courses increase the level of awareness of and the need to respect human rights," he said. Participants are trained to "stand up" to violations of human rights and assume responsibilities, whether on a government level or on the level of non-governmental organisations, he said.

Palestinian property owners in Hebron report tempting offers

HEBRON (AP) — As the Palestinian pottery seller tells it, a stranger in a blue Mercedes pulled up last month outside his shop, which sits opposite the Ibrahim Mosque.

Khaled Fakhouri says the driver offered to buy his five square-metre business for \$1.5 million. Mr. Fakhouri says when he hesitated, the driver said he could write his own price on a blank check.

Also near the site, a shrine sacred to Muslims and Jews, pool hall owner Abdul Raouf Muhtaseb says he, too, was offered a huge sum for his business — \$2.5 million.

Such stories abound in downtown Hebron these days, ahead of what seems to be the inevitable transfer of most of the city from Israeli to Palestinian control.

Palestinian residents — and even Yasser Arafat's government — fear that wealthy Americans and Europeans are buying Arab land for Jewish settlers in a last-minute scheme to expand Israeli control of the city.

Palestinian security agents are watching closely to try to stop any transactions, getting leads from residents who tell on their neighbours. So far, as many as 30 Arab homes and businesses are rumoured to have been sold.

Khader Shabaneh, a

Hebron baker who lives near the mosque, said he called security when his neighbour bragged that he would sell his four-room house to the Israelis unless the Palestinian government bought it for \$450,000.

"There is a lot of talk about people who are selling their houses," Mr. Shabaneh said.

Over the years, right-wing Jewish groups have been buying Palestinian properties in Arab areas such as Jerusalem's Old City.

The group Ateret Cohanim, which relies heavily on donations from the United States, has spearheaded the Jerusalem drive, often negotiating through middlemen and paying above-market prices.

And in Arab East Jerusalem, which the Palestinians want as their capital, Miami millionaire Irving Moskowitz owns land in the heart of an Arab neighbourhood. Israel recently announced a plan to build 132 homes for Jews there. Palestinians warned of riots if Israel proceeds with the plan.

Jewish settlers in Hebron were evasive when asked about their supporters. "There are many people throughout the world for whom it is very important to do what they can for the city of the patriarchs," said David Wilder, a spokesman for the

420 Jews living in the city of 110,000 Palestinians.

"Anyone who has the ability to assist in redeeming land in Hebron is only to be blessed," he said.

Settler leaders have said they secretly bought more than 20 Palestinian homes in recent years. That is in addition to what settlers say are properties "owned" by Jewish families.

The housing battle only becomes more fierce with the approach of the Hebron transfer. Under the emerging agreement, Israeli troops would remain in one-fifth of the city to protect Jewish settlers who live in five compounds downtown.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) is spending \$18 million in donations from Gulf countries to renovate dozens of crumbling and abandoned Hebron stone buildings, especially those near settler enclaves.

Mr. Wilder said it was difficult to buy from local Palestinians because once a sale became known, the Arab property owners faced ostracism, at best, and death, at worst. Palestinians living abroad, he said, "are much more likely to relieve themselves of properties they don't need for large amounts."

Freedom House censures Iraq, N. Korea, Cuba and Sudan

WASHINGTON (AP) — Iraq, North Korea, Cuba and Sudan were listed as the world's most repressive countries in an annual report by Freedom House, a pro-democracy group.

In its survey, the New York-based group said the number of free countries around the world grew in 1996 from 76 to 79, more than 41 per cent of the world's 191 countries and the most since the survey was launched in 1972.

"The broadening of freedom around the world indicates that democracy and the ideas of civil society are becoming a more permanent feature of the international landscape," Freedom House President Adrian Karatnycky wrote in an article accompanying the survey.

The survey said 2.26 billion people — 39.2 per cent of global population — live

in "not free" societies. "The group assess governments based on their level of political freedom and civil liberties."

It said Iraq, North Korea, Cuba and Sudan were the most repressive of 17 countries that received its lowest ratings. The others were Afghanistan, Bhutan, Burma, Burundi, China, Equatorial Guinea, Libya, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Syria, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Vietnam.

Of this group, the only one with a close relationship with the United States is Saudi Arabia.

The survey listed the following as the top five gains for freedom in 1996:

— The triumph of electoral politics in Central and Eastern Europe. In most cases, 1996 elections swept anti-communists and non-communists into office.

— Nicaragua's rejection of Sandinista candidate Daniel Ortega, an important step toward stabilising democracy in a country with a long history of right and left-wing dictatorships.

— The U.S.-led effort to bring peace to Bosnia, which helped end the bloodshed and established the basis for the reemergence of electoral democracy.

— The top five setbacks for freedom in 1996 cited by the survey were:

— The ongoing violence in Central Africa, which recently spread from

Rwanda and Burundi to Zaire. Left unchecked, ethnic violence could plunge a far wider part of Africa into turmoil and instability.

— The Taliban's march to power in Afghanistan, which has introduced a "primitive reign of terror masquerading as justice."

— China's growing aggressiveness, as reflected in continued military threats to neighbours and ideological intimidation aimed at foreign corporations.

— Iraq's invasion of Kurdish northern Iraq, which strengthened the hand of Saddam Hussein and set back hopes that Kurds may peacefully resolve their differences under self-rule.

— The reemergence of tyranny in Belarus at the hands of "power-hungry" President Alexander Lukashenko.

Turkish Cypriots will become part of Turkey if Cyprus joins EU — Erbakan

ANKARA (AFP) — Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan said Saturday that the Turkish-held north Cyprus would be integrated into Turkey if the Greek Cypriots were granted European Union (EU) membership without Ankara's consent.

"South Cyprus (the Greek-Cypriot-led Cyprus government) cannot enter the EU without Turkey's permission," Mr. Erbakan told reporters here.

"If it does, integration of the (breakaway) Turkish republic of northern Cyprus with Turkey will be materialised in the shortest possible time," Mr. Erbakan said.

The EU plans to start membership talks with

Cyprus in 1997.

The Turkish Cypriots say the internationally-recognised Greek-Cypriot government has no right to act on their behalf regarding the EU deal.

Turkish-Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş has also said he favours integration with Turkey in the event of the Greek-Cypriots' EU membership.

Cyprus has been divided since 1974 when Turkey occupied the northern third of the island in the wake of a right-wing coup in Nicosia aimed at unification with Greece.

The Turkish Cypriots created their own state, the Turkish republic of northern Cyprus, in 1983, but this

breakaway republic has been recognised only by Ankara.

Turkey, which has signed a customs union agreement with the EU to boost trade, is also keen to join the union, but has not been cited among the candidates that could enter the EU in the foreseeable future.

Ankara and the Turkish Cypriots say that under a 1960 agreement, which sets the basis for the Cyprus republic, the island cannot join an international organisation, of which guarantor states Turkey and Greece are not full members.

EU-member Greece opposes the Turkish argument.

7 gay Filipinos to be turned out of Kuwait

KUWAIT CITY (AFP) — Seven Filipino gay men have been arrested and are awaiting deportation from Kuwait for "indecent behaviour," a local daily and the Philippine embassy said.

"They were providing massage services without a licence... that is what the authorities said," an official at the Philippine embassy said. The official was commenting on a report in the English-language Arab Times which said the seven gay men, all hairdressers, were being deported for "indecent behaviour."

The official said embassy staff had visited the seven men in Talha deportation centre, and are trying to secure flights back to the Philippines for two of the men who do not have tickets.